

THE INSIDE TRACK

CONCISE INFORMATION ON THE UPCOMING SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

The Inside Track HRC46:
The 46th regular session of the Human Rights Council

Monday 22nd February to Tuesday 23rd March 2021
(5 week session), Assembly Hall/Online, Palais des Nations



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE
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UNIVERSAL RIGHTS GROUP



Picture of the 2021 Human Rights Council Bureau after the election of the HRC President on 15 January 2021. From left to right H.E. Monique van Daalen (Vice-President - WEOG), H.E. Nazhat Khan (President - APG), H.E. Ali Mahmoud (Vice-President - AG), and H.E. Keva Bain (Vice-President - GRULAC). H.E. Yuri Sterk (Vice-President - EEG) is not featured in this picture.

IN BRIEF

■ More than 120 high-level dignitaries and officials are expected to deliver statements during the three-day High-Level Segment of HRC46 via pre-recorded video messages, including, *inter alia*, H.E. Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoyev, President of Uzbekistan, H.E. Mr. Iván Duque Márquez, President of Colombia, H.E. Mr. Gitanas Nausėda, President of Lithuania, H.E. Mr. Mohammad Ashraf Ghani, President of Afghanistan, H.E. Mr. Andrzej Duda, President of Poland, H.E. Mr. Nicolás Maduro Moros, President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, H.E. Mr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, H.E. Mr. Abdalla Adam Hamdok, Prime Minister of the Sudan, H.E. Ms. Sanna Marin, Prime Minister of Finland, HE. Mr. Josaiá Vorque Bainimarama, Prime Minister and Minister for iTaukei Affairs, Sugar Industry, and Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Fiji, H.E. Mr. Aureilu Ciocoi, Acting Prime Minister and Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Moldova. So far, a total of seven heads or deputy heads of State, 11 heads or deputy heads of government and 98 ministers or vice-ministers are scheduled to address the Council. Secretary-General of the United Nations, H.E. Mr. Antonio Guterres, will also be delivering an address at the start of the High-Level Segment.

■ On 25 February, H.E. Ms. Michelle Bachelet, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, will give an **oral update on the human rights situation around the world**. This will provide the basis for an interactive dialogue with the High Commissioner on 25 and 26 February.

■ 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*: Afghanistan, Belarus, Colombia, Cyprus, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Occupied Palestinian Territories, occupied Syrian Golan, and Sri Lanka. The High Commissioner will deliver **oral updates** on the situations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Guatemala, Honduras, Ukraine, and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

■ It will also consider High Commissioner and Secretary General reports on a number of **thematic issues**, including *inter alia*:

- human rights implications of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- question of the realisation in all countries of economic, social and cultural rights;
- relationship between the realisation of the right to work and the enjoyment of all human rights by persons with disabilities;
- torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment;
- rights of persons with disabilities;
- rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities;
- missing persons;
- human rights and climate change;

- promotion and protection of human rights and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and
- combatting intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatisation of, and discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against, persons based on religion or belief.

■ The Council will consider reports from, and hold interactive dialogues with, **19 Special Procedures** (five country-specific and 14 thematic), including those dealing with: persons with disabilities; environment; adequate housing; food; torture; freedom of religion or belief; foreign debt; sale of children; albinism; cultural rights; counter terrorism; human rights defenders; privacy; minority issues; Democratic People’s Republic of Korea; Eritrea; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Mali; and Myanmar.

■ In addition, the Council will also hold interactive dialogues with a number of investigative mechanisms, including the Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen, the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi, the Commission on human rights in South Sudan, the Fact-Finding Mission on Venezuela, and the Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic. In accordance with **HRC/PRST/OS/13/1**, all the interactive dialogues will be individual.

■ The Council is expected to act on between 30 and 32 draft resolutions and other texts. The deadline for submitting draft resolutions has been set at **1 PM on 11 March**. Additionally, it is expected to appoint **six new mandate-holders**: the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia, two members of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (members from African and North American States), one member of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent (member from African States), and one member of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (member from Asia-Pacific States). More information on the appointment process and the candidates can be found [here](#)¹.

For the full draft programme of work for the 46th session, please click [here](#)².

1 <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/SP/Pages/HRC46.aspx>

2 <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session46/Pages/46RegularSession.aspx>

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

In view of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, similar extraordinary modalities to those utilised during the 36th and 37th session of the UPR working group are expected to continue, 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 COVID-19. These measures will be reviewed if and when the measures imposed by the Government of Switzerland change.

These include:

- Given the new sanitary restrictions imposed by the Government of Switzerland, the Council will have to conduct its work **fully virtually** at least until 28 February 2021 and must be ready to conduct the entire session virtually if necessary.
- All participants to the 46th session are **requested to be accredited via INDICO³**. Although access to UNOG premises will be restricted, all representatives will still have to register through INDICO to the 46th session in order to deliver video messages. When submitting an accreditation request, delegates are requested to indicate if they already possess an annual or temporary grounds pass at UNOG and, if so, are requested to upload a picture of the grounds pass in the relevant field of the INDICO platform. It is mandatory, for all participants, to provide a valid phone number.
- The 46th session will take place in the Assembly Hall. However, **physical attendance in the Hall cannot exceed five persons, in accordance with the prevailing sanitary restrictions.**
- Special Procedures, members of investigative mechanisms, and panelists will participate via video calls and pre-recorded video messages. States are strongly encouraged to send **pre-recorded video messages**. Video messages will have to be uploaded through the online registration system (<http://spreg.ohchr.org/>), and the deadline to upload video statements is at least 2 hours before the debate for which they are submitted. In the case that pre-recorded message are not possible, States can alternatively **deliver messages through live link via Zoom**. Only those States that cannot deliver messages via pre-recorded messages or through Zoom can exceptionally deliver them in the Assembly Hall while respecting the 5-person limit
- In light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the limitations imposed by the host country, **NGOs** in consultative status with ECOSOC, with active delegations in Geneva, will have to **deliver video-statements for all debates, including general debates, with a limit of three general debates**. Video messages will have to be uploaded directly through the online registration system (<http://ngoreg.ohchr.org/>). The deadline to upload video messages is at 6pm on the day prior to the debate for which they are submitted.

- Representatives that wish to raise **points of order** may alert the Secretariat via the **chat box in Zoom or via the podium hotline (079 421 99 48)**. The Chair would then stop the debate and give the floor, through the Zoom platform, to the delegation that has raised the point of order.
- Representatives wishing to exercise their **right of reply** remotely may do so by sending a request to **hrclistofspeakers@ohchr.org**. They will receive an invitation to a **video call** five minutes prior to the moment that the right of reply would be exercised. The Secretariat will test the connection, ensuring that sound and video are working. The representative will be able to follow what happens in the Assembly Hall via the platform and will hear when they are given the floor. At that point, the representative can begin the intervention.
- When **registering for panel debates**, States will be asked to rank the panels in the order of their priorities, with speaking slots allocated by the system taking these priorities into account. Should the number of States indicating the highest priority for a particular panel exceed the maximum number of speaking slots available, the slots shall be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.
- 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.
- As the HRC Bureau has reiterated, the main sponsors of draft resolutions are encouraged to **organise informal meetings virtually or conduct rounds of consultations in writing**. Delegations can write to the Videoconference Support team at UNOG (**videoconferences@un.org**) for assistance to set up virtual participation in the informal rooms via the platform WebEx. This is similar to the process for organising hybrid informal consultations during HRC45. If informal consultations are organised virtually, Core Groups should notify the HRC Secretariat in order for the meeting to be included in the online application “Sched”.
- The HRC Bureau is seized of the issue of the **voting process**. The Secretariat is testing and exploring several alternative options in case that the current limitations on in-person participation continue through 23 March, when action is scheduled to be taken on the draft decisions and resolutions.
- Side-events cannot take place inside of the Palais des Nations during HRC46. However, **virtual side events** can be listed on the Extranet for information purposes.



Human Rights Council meeting in the Assembly Hall.

MEASURES TO ASSIST SMALL DELEGATIONS DURING THE HRC

The HRC Helpdesk for SIDS and LDCs is meant to virtually facilitate the understanding of issues raised at the HRC and enhance small State delegates' participation in the session. The Help Desk can be reached before, during and after the session by email (HRCdesksmallPM@ohchr.org) or phone/WhatsApp +41 (0)79 500 00 32. The Secretariat of the LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund 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 cosponsor resolutions, amongst others. It is accessible through the following [link](#)⁴.

Delegates will be able to continue using the [HRC46 Sched](#) app to personalize their agendas and synchronize with their calendars. HRC46 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 46th session is scheduled to hold six panel debates on the following subjects:

- Annual high-level panel discussion on human rights mainstreaming – The state of play in the fight against racism and discrimination 20 years after the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Plan of Action and the exacerbating effects the COVID-19 pandemic has had on these efforts (22nd February)
- Biennial high-level panel discussion on the question of the death penalty – Human rights violations related to the use of the death penalty, in particular with respect to whether the use of the death penalty has a deterrent effect on crime rate (23rd February)
- Meeting on the role of poverty alleviation in promoting and protecting human rights (26th February)
- Annual full-day meeting on the rights of the child – The rights of the child and the Sustainable Development Goals (1st March)
- Annual interactive debate on the rights of persons with disabilities – Participation in sport under article 30 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (5th March)
- Debate on the midterm review of the international Decade for People of African Descent - Commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (12th March)

Concept notes on these panel discussions will be made available [here⁵](#).

WHAT'S IN PRINT?

During HRC46, States will consider 86 reports from the Secretary-General, High Commissioner, Working Groups, Special Procedures and other Council mechanisms.

These UN reports, which were commissioned by the Council through earlier resolutions, when published, will be made available [here⁶](#).

5 <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session46/Pages/46RegularSession.aspx>

6 <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session46/Pages/ListReports.aspx>

'L NUMBER' – DRAFT RESOLUTIONS AND OTHER TEXTS AT HRC46⁷

Based on announcements made during the HRC46 organisational meeting, the voluntary calendar of regular initiatives, and on recurring initiatives from one year previously (HRC43), the following draft resolutions and other texts are expected to be tabled during HRC46. 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 HRC46 organisational meeting)

Focus of resolution	Lead sponsor(s) ⁸	Expected agenda item	Vote history ⁹
Ensuring accountability and justice for all violations of international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including east Jerusalem*	Pakistan (OIC)	2	Vote (22-8-17)
Promotion and protection of human rights in Nicaragua	Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru	2	Vote (24-4-19)
Promoting reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka*	Canada, Germany, Montenegro, North Macedonia, United Kingdom	2	Consensus
Situation of human rights in Myanmar*	Portugal (EU)	4	Vote (37-2-8)
Situation of human rights in South Sudan*	Albania, Norway, United Kingdom	4	Consensus

7 When tabled before the Council, draft resolutions (and other texts) are given an 'L number.'

8 Based on main sponsors of previous resolutions.

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

Situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea*	Portugal (EU)	4	Consensus
The human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran*	Iceland, North Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Sweden, United Kingdom	4	Vote (22-8-15)
The human rights situation in the Syrian Arab Republic*	France, Germany, Italy, Jordan, Kuwait, the Netherlands, Qatar, Turkey, United Kingdom	4	Vote (27-1-19)
Human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem*	Pakistan (OIC)	7	Vote (42-2-3)
Human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan*	Pakistan (OIC)	7	Vote (26-17-4)
Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including east Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan*	Pakistan (OIC)	7	Vote (36-2-9)
Right of the Palestinian people to self-determination*	Pakistan (OIC)	7	Vote (43-2-2)
Cooperation with Georgia*	Georgia	10	Vote (20-2-24)
Technical assistance and capacity building for Mali in the field of human rights*	Cameroon (African Group)	10	Consensus
Technical assistance and capacity-building to improve human rights in Libya	Cameroon (African Group)	10	Consensus

THEMATIC RESOLUTIONS

(* = Initiative formally announced during HRC46 organisational meeting)

Focus of resolution	Lead sponsor(s) ¹⁰	Expected agenda item	Periodicity ¹¹	Vote history ¹²
Freedom of religion or belief*	Portugal (EU)	3	Annual	Consensus
Guarantee to the right to health through equitable and universal access to vaccines in response to pandemics and other health emergencies*	Ecuador	3	New	N/A
Human rights and the environment*	Costa Rica, Maldives, Morocco, Slovenia, Switzerland	3	Biennial	Consensus

10 Based on main sponsors of previous resolutions.

11 Based on the voluntary calendar of thematic resolutions.

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

Human rights, democracy and the rule of law*	Morocco, Norway, Peru, Republic of Korea, Romania, Tunisia	3	Biennial	Consensus
Mandate of the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of human rights by persons with albinism	Cameroon (African Group)	3	Biennial	Consensus
Promoting mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of human rights*	China	3	Annual	Vote (23-16-8)
Promotion of the enjoyment of cultural rights of everyone and respect of cultural diversity*	Cuba	3	Annual	Consensus
Question of the realization in all countries of economic, social and cultural rights*	Portugal	3	Annual	Consensus
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*	Cuba	3	Annual	Vote (26-15-6)

The negative impact of the non- repatriation of funds of illicit origin to the countries on the enjoyment of human rights, and the importance of improving international cooperation*	Cameroon (African Group)	3	Biennial	Vote (31-2-14)
The negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights*	Azerbaijan (NAM, except Colombia and Honduras)	3	Annual	Vote (25-16-6)
The right to food*	Cuba	3	Annual	Consensus
The right to privacy in the digital age*	Austria, Brazil, Germany, Liechtenstein, Mexico	3	Biennial	Consensus
Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment*	Denmark	3	Triennial	Consensus
Combatting intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against, persons based on religion or belief*	Pakistan (OIC)	9	Annual	Consensus

THE COUNCIL'S MECHANISMS

SPECIAL PROCEDURES

14 thematic Special Procedures (e.g. Special Rapporteurs, and Independent Experts) will present their reports (including country mission reports) during HRC46. In addition, five 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). On 12 March, Prof. Anita Ramasatry, Chair of the Coordination Committee, will also present the annual report of the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council.

COUNTRY-SPECIFIC MANDATES

Mandate	Presentation of report/oral updates and interactive dialogue ¹³
Special Rapporteur on Eritrea	24th February
Special Rapporteur on the Islamic Republic of Iran	9th March
Special Rapporteur on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea	9th-10th March
Special Rapporteur on Myanmar	11th March
Independent Expert on Mali	19th March

THEMATIC MANDATES

Mandate	Presentation of report and interactive dialogue	Country mission reports
Special Rapporteur on the right to food	26th February	
Special Rapporteur on the sale of children	1st March	The Gambia
Independent Expert on foreign debt	2nd March	
Special Rapporteur on cultural rights	2nd March	Tuvalu
Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief	2nd March	
Independent Expert on albinism	3rd March	Brazil

Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities	3rd March	
Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders	3rd - 4th March	Peru
Special Rapporteur on the right to a healthy environment	3rd - 4th March	
Special Rapporteur on counter-terrorism	4th March	
Special Rapporteur on torture	4th March	Maldives
Special Rapporteur on adequate housing	5th March	New Zealand
Special Rapporteur on privacy	5th March	Argentina France Germany Republic of Korea United Kingdom United States of America
Special Rapporteur on minority issues	15th March	Kyrgyzstan

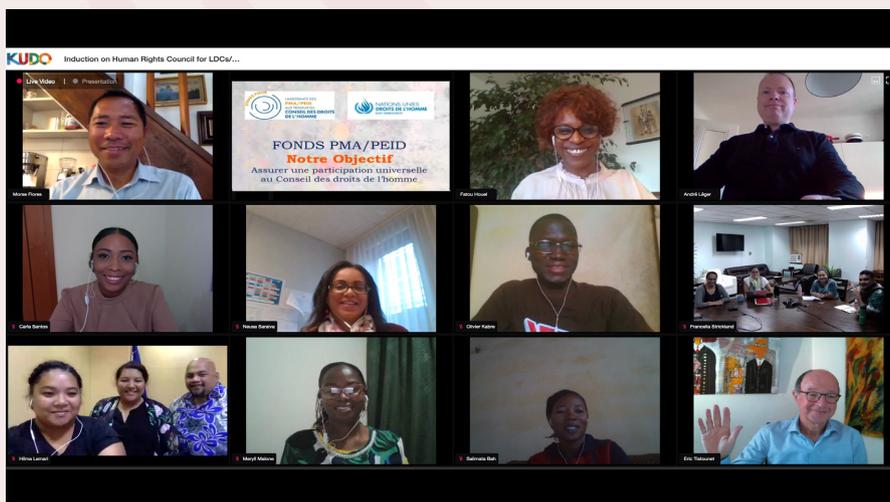
TRUST FUND TO SUPPORT THE PARTICIPATION OF LDCs AND SIDS

Ahead of HRC46 the **Voluntary Technical Assistance Trust Fund to support the participation of LDCs and SIDS in the work of the Council** provided training sessions for government officials in accordance with its Council mandate. On 15 and 16 February 2021, the Trust Fund Secretariat organised two virtual induction courses on the Human Rights Council, in anticipation of the 46th session.

The main objective of the virtual induction course, the first of their kind since the establishment of the Trust Fund in 2012, was to ensure that LDCs/SIDS delegates, particularly those that do not have a Permanent Mission in Geneva, received timely information on how to engage with the Council.

Over 65 government officials from 26 LDCs/SIDS participated in the 3-hour induction sessions. The majority of participants were based in capitals around the world, including Africa (14 countries), Asia-Pacific (eight countries) and the Caribbean (four countries). These induction sessions were successfully conducted via the Kudo platform and managed by the ICC (International Computing Centre), with simultaneous interpretation in English and French. According to the polls conducted at the end of each session, 90 per cent of the participants indicated that the induction met or exceeded their expectations.

In light of this positive experience aimed at ensuring that No One is Left Behind, the Trust Fund will organise similar virtual induction courses in the future.



UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW

THE UPR OUTCOME REPORTS OF 14 STATES¹⁵ WILL BE CONSIDERED FOR ADOPTION BY THE COUNCIL DURING HRC46 (15TH - 17TH MARCH).

ANDORRA, BELARUS, BULGARIA*,
CROATIA, HONDURAS, JAMAICA,
LIBERIA, LIBYA*, MALAWI*,
MALDIVES, MARSHALL ISLANDS*,
MONGOLIA, PANAMA,
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

*Council Members

MOST COMMON THEMES OF HRC46*



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



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