

THE INSIDE TRACK

CONCISE INFORMATION ON THE UPCOMING SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

The Inside Track HRC48:
The 48th regular session of the Human Rights Council

Monday 13th September to Friday 8th October 2021
(4 week session), Room XX Palais des Nations / Online



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE
UNITED NATIONS | GENEVA



UNIVERSAL RIGHTS GROUP



H.E. Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights briefing the Council during the 31st Special Session of the Human Rights Council on the serious human rights concerns and situation in Afghanistan.

IN BRIEF

■ On 13th September, H.E. Michelle Bachelet, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, will open HRC48 with an **oral update on her annual report on the human rights situation around the world**. This oral update together with other country specific oral updates given by the High Commissioner will provide the basis for the general debate under Item 2 on 14th and 15th September.

■ 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*: Cambodia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Georgia, Myanmar, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Sudan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), and Yemen. Additionally, the High Commissioner will deliver **oral updates** on the situations in Afghanistan, Nicaragua, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, the Tigray region of Ethiopia, and Ukraine, and a **written update** on Myanmar.

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

- Conscientious objection to military service;
- Contribution of the special procedures in assisting States and other stakeholders in the prevention of human rights violations and abuses;
- Cooperation with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights;
- Current state of play of the mainstreaming of the human rights of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations in the work of the Council;
- Effects of artificial intelligence on the enjoyment of the right to privacy;
- Rights of indigenous peoples;
- Right to development.

■ The Council will consider reports from, and hold interactive dialogues with, 18 Special Procedures (four country-specific and 14 thematic), including those dealing with: arbitrary detention; enforced disappearances; hazardous substances and wastes; Indigenous Peoples; international order; mercenaries; older persons; People of African Descent; racism; right to development; slavery; truth, justice and reparation; unilateral coercive measures; water and sanitation; Cambodia; Central African Republic; Myanmar; and Somalia. In accordance with HRC/PRST/OS/13/1 all the Interactive Dialogues (IDs) will be individual.

■ As per HRC/PRST/OS/13/1 there were no general debates during HRC47. Therefore, the reports and oral updates of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General as well as subsidiary bodies that were presented during HRC47 will be considered during the relevant general debates at this session, unless they were mandated to be considered during an interactive dialogue, which already took place.

■ On 22 September the Council will receive for the first time a briefing by the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission on the Commission's work. This briefing was mandated by Council resolution 45/31 on 'the contribution of the Human Rights Council to the prevention of human rights violations'.

■ The Council is expected to act on around 28 draft resolutions and other texts. The deadline for submitting draft resolutions has been set at 1 PM on 29th September 2021. Additionally, it is expected to appoint three new mandate-holders, including the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights, one member of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent (member from Latin American and Caribbean States), and one member of the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises (member from Latin American and Caribbean States). More information on the appointment process and the candidates can be found [here](#)¹.

For the full draft programme of work for the 48th session, please click [here](#)².

1 <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/SP/Pages/HRC48.aspx>

2 https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session48/Documents/PoW_EN.doc

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 HRC46 and HRC47 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 extraordinary modalities include:

- HRC48 will take place in **Room XX**. Room XX will be allocated for plenary Council meetings and Room XXVI for informal consultations. As the capacity of Room XX will not be able to accommodate one delegate per Member and Observer State as well as representatives of international organizations and NGOs, the Council will have to conduct its **work in a primarily virtual manner**. All participants to HRC48 are requested to be accredited via **INDICO³**.
- Although access to UNOG premises will be restricted, **all representatives will still have to register through INDICO 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.
- As physical attendance in the Room XX **cannot exceed 148 persons**, in accordance with the prevailing sanitary restrictions, State delegations are **strongly encouraged to send pre-recorded video statements**. Video messages will have to be uploaded through the online registration system (<http://spreg.ohchr.org/>), which will open on Monday 6 September at 2 PM. The deadline to upload video statements is at least 2 hours before the start of the debate for which they are submitted. In the case that pre-recorded messages are not possible, States can alternatively **deliver messages through a live link via Zoom**. Only those States which, due to technical difficulties, cannot deliver messages via pre-recorded messages or via Zoom, may exceptionally deliver them in Room XX and are invited to contact the Secretariat at hrcouncil@ohchr.org to make the necessary arrangements.
- In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, **NGOs** in consultative status with ECOSOC will have to **deliver video-statements for all interactive dialogues as well as for panel discussions and UPR adoptions**. 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** when not in the room may alert the Secretariat by using the **'raise hand' function on Zoom**. 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 Room XX via the platform and will hear when they are given the floor. At that point, the representative can begin the intervention.
- **Special Procedures, members of investigative mechanisms, and panelists** who are unable to travel to Geneva are strongly encouraged to send pre-recorded video messages.
- States are also strongly encouraged to send pre-recorded video messages for their initial presentations and participate in the interactive dialogues or panel discussion via Zoom.
- 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 **relevant focal point of the Council Secretariat** (mkumar@ohchr.org) for assistance to set up virtual participation in the informal rooms via the platform WebEx. However, representatives of the draft resolution's Core Group will have the opportunity to lead the virtual informal consultation from Room XXVI or another available room in the Palais des Nations, if they wish to do so. 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"**.
- **Side-events** cannot take place inside of the Palais des Nations during HRC48. However, virtual side events can be listed on the **Extranet** for information purposes.



47th Regular Session of the Human Rights Council in June 2021.

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 [HRC48 Sched App](#) to personalize their agendas and synchronize with their calendars. HRC48 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 48th session is scheduled to hold six panel debates on the following subjects:

- Biennial panel discussion on unilateral coercive measures and human rights – Unilateral sanctions: jurisdiction and extraterritoriality (16th September)
- Annual discussion on the integration of a gender perspective throughout the work of the Human Rights Council and that of its mechanisms – The gender digital divide in times of the COVID-19 pandemic (27th September)
- Annual half-day panel discussion on the rights of indigenous peoples – Situation of human rights of indigenous peoples facing the COVID-19 pandemic, with a special focus on the right to participation (28th September)
- Half-day panel discussion on deepening inequalities exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and their implications for the realization of human rights (28th September)
- High-level panel discussion on the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (29th September)
- Panel discussion on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of peaceful protest (29th September)

Concept notes on these panel discussions will be made available [here](#)⁵.

WHAT'S IN PRINT?

During HRC48, States will consider 87 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](#)⁶.

5 <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session48/Pages/48RegularSession.aspx>
6 <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session48/Pages/ListReports.aspx>

‘L NUMBER’ – DRAFT RESOLUTIONS AND OTHER TEXTS AT HRC48⁷

Based on announcements made during the HRC48 organisational meeting, the voluntary calendar of regular initiatives, and on recurring initiatives from one year previously (HRC45), the following draft resolutions and other texts are expected to be tabled during HRC48. 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 HRC48 organisational meeting)

Focus of resolution	Lead sponsor(s) ⁸	Expected agenda item	Vote history ⁹
Situation of human rights in Yemen*	Belgium, Canada, Ireland, Luxembourg, The Netherlands	2	Vote (22-12-12)
Strengthening cooperation and technical assistance in the field of human rights in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	2	Vote (14-7-26)
Situation of human rights in Burundi*	Slovenia (EU)	4	Vote (24-6-17)
Situation of human rights in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela	Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay, Peru	4	Vote (22-3-22)

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 Syrian Arab Republic*	France, Germany, Italy, Jordan, Kuwait, The Netherlands, Qatar, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States of America	4	Vote (27-1-19)
Advisory services and technical assistance for Cambodia*	Japan	10	Consensus
Assistance to Somalia in the field of human rights	Somalia, United Kingdom	10	Consensus
Technical assistance and capacity-building for Yemen in the field of human rights*	Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, United Arab Emirates, Yemen	10	Consensus
Technical assistance and capacity-building in the field of human rights in the Central African Republic	Cameroon (African Group)	10	Consensus
Technical assistance and capacity-building in the field of human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*	Cameroon (African Group)	10	Consensus
Technical assistance and capacity-building to further improve human rights in the Sudan	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 HRC48 organisational meeting)

Focus of resolution	Lead sponsor(s) ¹⁰	Expected agenda item	Periodicity ¹¹	Vote history ¹²
Child, early, and forced marriage*	Argentina, Canada, Honduras, Italy, Montenegro, The Netherlands, Poland, Sierra Leone, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Thailand, Zambia	3	Biennial	Consensus
Equal participation in political and public affairs*	Botswana, Czech Republic, Indonesia, The Netherlands, Peru	3	Triennial	Consensus
Human rights and indigenous peoples*	Guatemala, Mexico	3	Annual	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)

Promotion of a democratic and equitable international order*	Cuba	3	Annual	Vote (25-14-8)
The question of the death penalty*	Belgium, Benin, Costa Rica, France, Mexico, Moldova, Mongolia, Switzerland	3	Biennial	Vote (26-14-6)
The recognition of the right to a safe, clean, and healthy environment*	Costa Rica, Maldives, Morocco, Slovenia, Switzerland	3	New initiative	N/A
The right to development*	Azerbaijan (NAM)	3	Annual	Vote (27-13-7)
The use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination*	Cuba	3	Annual	Vote (29-14-4)
The human rights of older persons*	Argentina, Brazil	3	Triennial	Consensus

Right to privacy in the digital age*	Austria, Brazil, Germany, Liechtenstein, Mexico	3	Biennial	Consensus
Cooperation with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights*	Fiji, Ghana, Hungary, Ireland, Uruguay	5	Biennial	Vote (36-0-11)
From rhetoric to reality: a global call for concrete action against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance*	Cameroon (African Group)	9	Annual	Consensus
Enhancement of technical cooperation and capacity-building in the field of human rights*	Brazil, Honduras, Indonesia, Morocco, Norway, Qatar, Singapore, Thailand, Turkey	10	Annual	Consensus

THE COUNCIL’S MECHANISMS

SPECIAL PROCEDURES

14 thematic Special Procedures (i.e. Special Rapporteurs, Independent Experts, and Working Groups) will present their reports (including country mission reports) during HRC48. In addition, four country-specific Special Procedures (i.e. 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 ¹³
Special Rapporteur on Myanmar	22nd September
Special Rapporteur on Cambodia	6th October
Independent Expert on Somalia	6th October
Independent Expert on the Central African Republic	7th October

THEMATIC MANDATES

Mandate	Presentation of report and interactive dialogue	Country mission reports
Special Rapporteur on water and sanitation	15th September	
Special Rapporteur on unilateral coercive measures	15th September	Qatar Venezuela (Bolivian Republic of)
Special Rapporteur on truth, justice and reparation	16th September	Follow-up on the visits to Tunisia, Uruguay and Spain Follow-up on the visits to Burundi, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Sri Lanka
Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery	17th September	
Special Rapporteur on the right to development	17th September	



Working Group on arbitrary detention	20th September	
Independent Expert on older persons	20th September	
Independent Expert on international order	20th September	
Working Group on enforced disappearances	21st September	
Working Group on mercenaries	21st September	
Special Rapporteur on hazardous substances and wastes	21st September	
Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples	28th September	
Working Group on People of African Descent	4 October	
Special Rapporteur on racism	4 October	

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 16 (ten female and six male) government officials to participate in HRC48. This is the second largest cohort of beneficiaries to attend a Council session since the establishment of the Trust Fund. The delegates also followed a virtual induction course at the start of September in preparation of their participation at HRC48. The biographies of the participating delegates can be consulted [here](#).

At HRC48 the Trust Fund will support the participation of delegates from the following LDCs and SIDS:

- Benin
- Cambodia
- Comoros
- The Gambia
- Lesotho
- Maldives
- Mali
- Mauritius
- Nepal*
- Saint Vincent and The Grenadines
- Sudan*
- Suriname
- Tanzania
- Togo*
- Uganda
- Zambia

* Council Members

UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW

THE UPR OUTCOME REPORTS OF 15 STATES WILL BE CONSIDERED FOR ADOPTION BY THE COUNCIL DURING HRC48 (EXPECTED 30TH SEPTEMBER - 1ST OCTOBER).

BELGIUM, DENMARK*, ESTONIA,
LATVIA, MOZAMBIQUE, MYANMAR,
NAMIBIA*, NIGER, PALAU,
SEYCHELLES, SIERRA LEONE,
SINGAPORE, SOLOMON ISLANDS,
SOMALIA*

*Council Members

MOST COMMON THEMES OF HRC48*





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