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Chair: Ms. Mejía Vélez (Colombia)

Contents

Agenda item 68: Promotion and protection of human rights

- (b) Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms
- (c) Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 68: Promotion and protection of human rights (A/71/40 and A/C.3/71/4)

(b) Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms (A/71/56, A/71/254, A/71/255, A/71/269, A/71/271, A/71/273, A/71/278, A/71/279, A/71/280, A/71/281, A/71/282, A/71/284, A/71/285, A/71/286, A/71/287, A/71/291, A/71/299, A/71/302, A/71/303, A/71/304, A/71/305, A/71/310, A/71/314, A/71/317, A/71/319, A/71/332, A/71/344, A/71/344/Corr.1, A/71/348, A/71/358, A/71/367, A/71/368, A/71/369, A/71/372, A/71/373, A/71/384, A/71/385, A/71/405, A/71/567 (to be issued) and A/C.3/71/5)

(c) Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives (A/71/379-S/2016/788, A/71/540-S/2016/839, A/71/308, A/71/361, A/71/374, A/71/394, A/71/402, A/71/418, A/71/439, A/71/554 and A/C.3/71/5)

1. **Ms. Bennoune** (Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights), introducing her report (A/71/317), said that the intentional destruction of cultural heritage was a violation of human rights and an urgent priority. Cultural heritage had both tangible and intangible aspects that were closely interlinked. The right of access to and enjoyment of cultural heritage was recognized in international human rights law under the right to participate in cultural life. It was a fundamental resource for other human rights, in particular, the rights to freedom of expression, thought, conscience and religion; the right to development; and the economic rights of persons working in heritage-related tourism. All of those rights were trampled upon by the intentional destruction of heritage.

2. The protection of heritage in times of conflict was governed by a specific regime, which included the Hague Convention of 1954 for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its Protocols. States parties were required to respect cultural property and refrain from any active hostility directed against it or any use likely to expose it to such acts, subject only to imperative military necessity, while the second protocol to the Convention further

limited the military necessity exception. Despite those protections, there had been troubling reports of violations in recent conflicts. She therefore called on States to recognize that any military necessity exception to the ban on targeting cultural property must be interpreted narrowly, taking into consideration the impact on cultural rights. All military decisions resulting in the destruction of or damage to cultural heritage should be subject to close public scrutiny. She called on all parties involved in the current military action, including in an advisory capacity, in and around the city of Mosul to protect its rich cultural heritage.

3. She expressed concern that many States had not adhered to the 1954 Hague Convention and its Protocols. Nevertheless, there were currently 69 parties to the Second Protocol, and the United Kingdom had become the first permanent member of the Security Council to ratify it. She called upon all permanent members of the Security Council to follow suit in the next two years and demonstrate collective leadership on that critical issue, which was at the heart of meaningful peace and security. Current international standards, such as article 19 of the Hague Convention, must be applied more robustly and new strategies must be developed to hold non-State actors to account and prevent them from engaging in destruction. Individuals must be held criminally responsible for serious offenses against cultural heritage, which could constitute war crimes or crimes against humanity when carried out with discriminatory intent and could also be evidence of intent to destroy a group under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. A human rights approach emphasized accountability. She welcomed the decision of the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, which had classified the destruction of cultural and religious sites as a stand-alone war crime in the case of Ahmad Al Faqi Al Mahdi, who had received a nine-year sentence in connection with the destruction at Timbuktu, Mali. She hoped to see similar prosecutions in the future and reminded States of the vital need to collect and preserve evidence of crimes.

4. In the twenty-first century, a new wave of deliberate destruction was being recorded, its impact magnified by the wide distribution of images. Such acts, often openly proclaimed and justified by perpetrators, were a form of cultural warfare and represented an urgent challenge to cultural rights that

required a rapid and calculated international response. Acts of deliberate destruction were often accompanied by other serious assaults on human dignity and human rights, including acts of terrorism, and had to be addressed in the context of holistic strategies for the promotion of human rights and peacebuilding. The protection of cultural heritage must be included in the mandates of peacekeeping missions, and concern for its destruction must go hand in hand with the deep concern for the destruction of lives.

5. Acts of intentional destruction often disproportionately affected persons belonging to minorities and contributed to intolerance. Sites that were testimonies to the friendship and interactions between various groups were also specifically targeted. There were many cases in which destruction was part of the cultural cleansing practiced by diverse extremists. To combat those forms of cultural heritage destruction, the international community must tackle extremist and fundamentalist ideologies, sectarianism and discriminatory attitudes towards minorities, indigenous peoples and other groups, in accordance with international human rights standards. Many ongoing acts of destruction went unnoticed by the international community, in particular those targeting indigenous peoples. The momentum from the reaction to the destruction of Palmyra must be used to draw attention to other patterns of past or current heritage destruction. In many parts of the world, the history of the destruction of indigenous cultural heritage was a systematic part of colonialism or nationalist policies in post-colonial States and had produced long-lasting effects on the human rights of many indigenous peoples. It was critical for the international community to employ a human rights approach that considered the rights of individuals and populations in responses to intentional destruction of cultural heritage.

6. Cultural heritage defenders must be protected. They laboured in obscurity and danger and put their safety and economic security at risk to carry out their work. Some had even laid down their lives. States must respect their rights, ensure their safety and security and provide them with the conditions necessary to complete their work, including all needed material and technical assistance. States must also grant them asylum when necessary and ensure that they could continue their work and take part in the protection and reconstruction of their cultural heritage when they

were displaced. There was also a need to expedite visas and facilitate travel for cultural heritage professionals based in conflict areas.

7. She encouraged the development and adoption of a gender-sensitive approach to the protection of cultural heritage, which should include recognizing the work of women cultural heritage defenders, promoting the inclusion of women cultural heritage experts in relevant forums and institutions and combating the discrimination faced by women in accessing cultural heritage, as well as ensuring that their heritage was recognized. A human rights approach would support the allocation of sufficient budgetary resources, at both the national and international levels. Preventive action and education concerning cultural heritage and cultural rights were vital, especially for young people.

8. **Ms. Karimdoost** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that all atrocities committed by terrorists and extremists groups, such as Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and its affiliates, including the bombing, looting and destruction of culture heritage, were in contravention of international human rights standards and must be immediately terminated, and perpetrators must be brought to justice. Her delegation shared the concerns raised by the Special Rapporteur regarding violations of the rights of Shia citizens in the Persian Gulf region and instances of conflict-related destruction by coalition airstrikes in Yemen. It would be helpful to discuss additional practical and legal measures that should be taken by the international community to better protect cultural heritage in situations of armed conflict or in the face of discrimination against religious minorities.

9. **Mr. Al-Hussaini** (Iraq) said that the Constitution of Iraq safeguarded cultural rights by protecting the religious, intellectual and cultural freedoms of all sectors of society, thereby promoting a culture of tolerance, ensuring the rights of minorities, maintaining the rule of law and proscribing any action that limited the activities of any minority group. His Government had undertaken efforts to preserve cultural and historic sites, and a number of locations had recently been designated World Heritage Sites by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in order to protect them.

10. The report condemned the systemic destruction of Iraqi heritage at the hands of ISIL, which was

smuggling cultural relics out of the country and selling them in many world capitals to finance its terrorist operations and activities. He wished to know what measures could be adopted by international organizations to reconstruct historic and cultural sites.

11. **Ms. Mugaas** (Norway) said that the destruction of cultural heritage was an attack on humanity that called for accountability and an end to impunity. The scale of the current destruction of cultural heritage and the complexity of illicit trafficking made it necessary to intensify preventive measures, both nationally and internationally, and she urged all States to join in that effort.

12. **Ms. Savitri** (Indonesia) said that her Government was committed to supporting the preservation and protection of cultural heritage through bilateral mechanisms, which included the provision of technical cooperation for capacity-building in Cambodia to help preserve Angkor Wat. In addition, her delegation had sponsored General Assembly resolution [69/281](#) on saving the cultural heritage of Iraq. She would like to hear more about national and international strategies that could be effective in preventing intentional cultural destruction and about the role that regional cooperation and organizations could play.

13. **Mr. Forax** (Observer for the European Union) said that, in order to protect heritage, it was essential to adopt a holistic approach that took into account the connection between tangible and intangible heritage. The European Union agreed that both should be protected and respected at the national, regional and international levels. The international community should therefore prioritize the wider ratification of the Hague Convention, which provided a concrete legal instrument and preventive measures for protection.

14. Intentional destruction, with its human rights implications, was not sufficiently addressed as a violation of human rights. His delegation agreed that measures must be taken to facilitate prosecutions under domestic laws of those responsible for the intentional destruction of cultural heritage, looting and illicit trafficking in cultural objects. The recent ruling of the International Criminal Court was a significant development in cultural heritage protection and a sign of growing recognition for the importance of cultural rights. He asked the Special Rapporteur to suggest

measures to ensure the end of impunity for perpetrators.

15. The report also discussed insufficient protection for cultural heritage defenders, who should be regarded as human rights defenders. The European Union was strongly committed to supporting their role and would be interested to hear how States could provide cultural rights defenders with a safe and enabling environment for action.

16. **Mr. Almabruk** (Libya) said that the international community must work together to protect cultural heritage, especially in conflict situations. She wondered whether there were international legal instruments that could be used to track the illicit trafficking of antiquities sold abroad and whether international cooperation in that area had been successful in recovering goods. She also asked what new mechanisms she planned to develop in order to ensure the protection of cultural heritage.

17. **Ms. Kuzbet** (Russian Federation) said that Islamic extremists in Syria and Iraq had created a black market for selling antiquities, and called upon States to put an end to the illegal trade in cultural relics. The General Assembly and the Human Rights Council should discuss cultural issues exclusively in the context of promoting the right to take part in cultural life and in a way that aligned with the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The protection of cultural heritage was an important area of work for UNESCO, and the Third Committee should not duplicate the work of United Nations specialized agencies.

18. **Ms. Moutchou** (Morocco) said that her Government supported international legislation to protect against the intentional destruction of cultural heritage, which amounted to cultural terrorism and a crime against humanity. The international community must take appropriate measures to ensure that those selling cultural goods were required to furnish written verification of the origin of items. Efforts must be made to raise awareness among all culture and heritage stakeholders, with a particular emphasis on youth involvement. She asked how to effectively and efficiently prevent the destruction of cultural goods in all circumstances.

19. Human rights defenders were often associated with civil and political rights, while social, economic and cultural rights were ignored and forgotten. She asked for suggestions on how to promote and strengthen the role of cultural rights defenders and include them in peace negotiations.

20. **Mr. Uğurluoğlu** (Turkey) said that situations of conflict or instability aggravated the risks of destruction and illicit trafficking, as evidenced by the recent actions of terrorist organizations such as ISIL. He wished to elaborate on the state of historical buildings in Diyarbakir, Turkey, as referenced in the report. Due to terrorist attacks in December 2015, certain parts of the periphery of the province of Diyarbakir had been affected, including the first buffer zone of the World Heritage Site. Emergency conservation measures had been introduced by local authorities to secure the site and deny access to terrorists. Soon afterwards, the Government had outlined a recovery plan for the area and announced its commitment to restore the historical architectural heritage. Following comprehensive technical assessments, which had been shared with UNESCO, substantial planning had begun to restore and safeguard the property affected.

21. He also wished to make a statement on behalf of the Turkish Cypriots, to ensure that their voice was heard. It was an established principle of the United Nations that place names could identify and reflect culture, heritage and landscape and were significant elements of the cultural heritage of a nation. The guiding principles adopted by the United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names had been a practical one, and the approach of the Turkish Cypriots was in full conformity with those principles. Furthermore, there were no restrictions whatsoever on the use of former Greek names in the northern part of Cyprus, and they were often used interchangeably.

22. **Ms. Lavalle Arroyo** (Mexico) said that Mexico had 34 sites inscribed on the World Heritage List, the most in Latin America and the sixth most in the world, and therefore had a great responsibility to preserve cultural heritage. She asked for examples of good practices in which States recognized the protection of cultural heritage and cultural rights as a critical component of humanitarian assistance, including in

conflicts. With regard to the preservation and protection of cultural heritage, she wondered what role peacekeeping missions should play and how States could incorporate a gender perspective.

23. **Ms. Bennoune** (Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights) said that, with regard to the destruction of cultural heritage in Yemen, as at May 2016, the air strikes of the military coalition led by Saudi Arabia had caused the destruction of over 500 schools, 39 universities and vocational institutes and over 50 sites of religious, historic and cultural significance. Only one of those sites had been identified as a military objective by the coalition, and no justification of military necessity had been articulated to support their destruction. She would continue to monitor that situation closely and hoped that the international community would take urgent action to mitigate the very serious impact for future generations in Yemen. The report also noted the destruction of cultural heritage by other actors. For example, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights had received reports that the Popular Committees affiliated with the Houthis had launched attacks that had damaged public schools, mosques and Qur'anic schools, and she had heard reports of intentional destruction of cultural and religious sites by jihadist groups as well.

24. With regard to the destruction of the cultural heritage associated with minority groups, she had expressed concern regarding violations of the rights of Shia citizens in Bahrain, ranging from destruction of significant cultural and religious sites to changes made to the names of places and their marginalization in the context of the history of the country. In the spirit of friendliness and cooperation, she believed that it was important to have a universal approach to cultural heritage. She wished to point out that she had also raised the situation of the Baha'i in the Islamic Republic of Iran who had experienced repeated destruction of their cemeteries and places of cultural and religious significance.

25. She hoped that the current discussion would mark the beginning of a partnership to find ways to implement the recommendations made in her report, which included an increase in the number of parties to the relevant conventions and adequate legislation to implement legal standards. In times of peace, States

must prepare for threats to cultural heritage arising from conflicts and document both tangible and intangible cultural heritage, which could be done with the use of digital technologies and new media. There must be sufficient budgetary allocations at the national and international levels to make it clear that cultural heritage was not a luxury. It was central to human rights protection, and in conflict situations, heritage sites gave the people something to return to and helped to maintain a sense of identity and belonging. Training for all relevant personnel, including the military, customs and law enforcement, was essential.

26. In many ways, tangible cultural heritage was irreplaceable once it was destroyed. However, reconstruction could play an important role. The reconstruction of the bridge in Mostar was one such example. The international community must ensure that reconstruction efforts involved consultations with groups that had a close relationship to the cultural heritage site. In some areas, reconstruction efforts had promoted reconciliation by involving experts from different groups.

27. The report did not suggest that cultural rights defenders should be placed in a new category; Human Rights Council resolution 31/32 called for the promotion and facilitation of the work of those defending economic, social and cultural rights and she merely called for the implementation of that resolution. An important component of ending impunity was collecting and preserving evidence in times of conflict and post-conflict. She hoped that the recent International Criminal Court judgement would be representative of jurisprudence that would be seen in national courts as well.

28. Young people were the future of cultural heritage. The international community must support the efforts of civil society to include future generations of cultural heritage defenders and ensure that education at all levels incorporated cultural heritage and its relationship to the history and human rights of all people.

29. The obligation to stop looting must be viewed as a collective one which included not only the States where looting took place but also the more powerful countries that offered the lucrative markets for looted objects. If the market demands were not reduced, there would be further incentive for looting and for

intentional destruction, and more funding for groups engaging in it.

30. She expressed great concern about the level of destruction at Diyarbakir caused by armed clashes, and would continue to monitor the situation. Any efforts to combat or prevent terrorism must be made in accordance with international law, including the standards governing cultural heritage protection. She had raised the issue of the systematic changing of place names and its impact on cultural heritage in a number of instances. Place names were a form of intangible cultural heritage, and imposing a widespread, systematic change on those place names impacted the human rights of that population.

31. Mainstreaming gender across the discussion of cultural heritage was critical. There were many women cultural heritage experts, and they must be allowed to rise to the highest levels of national and international institutions. The work of women cultural heritage professionals must be funded, and the international community must also recognize that heritage related to women was often targeted.

32. The safeguarding, restoration and memorialization of cultural heritage must be systematically incorporated in the mandate of peacekeeping missions, as they could play a critical role on the ground. Some peacekeeping missions had taken on that role and others had not had clarity as to whether it was within their remit. The international community could learn from the past experiences in Mali.

33. **Mr. de Greiff** (Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence), introducing his report, which focused on national consultations on transitional justice mechanisms, said that the constant calls to design transitional justice measures in consultation with victims and other relevant stakeholders had not been matched by efforts to systematically analyse national experiences through consultations. The report addressed preconditions for the success of national consultations on transnational justice mechanisms, their operational challenges and their contribution to the legitimacy of transitions. Consultations could improve the quality of the information used in decision-making and could broaden the range of viable alternatives that should be considered. They could also

offer recognition to victims, empower them as rights holders, identify stakeholders who were typically excluded from discussions about transnational justice and facilitate processes of social reintegration.

34. In order to ensure the effectiveness and legitimacy of consultations, participants must feel confident that they could contribute to the process without putting their safety at risk: they must be free from coercion, threats and reprisals. One of the primary goals was to solicit the views of those most affected by past violations. Those individuals were rarely consulted on public matters and frequently subjected to multiple forms of victimization, discrimination and marginalization. In addition, consultations should be designed to increase the familiarity of both organizers and participants with the substantive subject matter, which called for more intensive and focused capacity-building efforts. They should precede the development of transitional justice options and be designed and implemented by an entity capable of safeguarding their integrity, independence and reliability. Such entities should be involved in the selection of participants and the determination of the agenda, methodology, venues and reporting procedure.

35. Consultations had rarely been adequately integrated into the design and implementation of transitional justice measures, and none had fully met the immense challenges associated with ensuring that participants were sufficiently familiar with the relevant concepts and alternatives to allow for concrete proposals and other outputs readily usable in policymaking. However, the report identified efforts that had been made in that regard.

36. Consultations could also contribute to the legitimacy of transitions, as they represented an act of recognition, which was one of the basic goals of transitional justice measures. Those whose rights had been systematically trampled on were asked to contribute to the design of mechanisms that would address exactly those violations and abuses. Consultation processes with victims sent a powerful message of inclusion to them and to society at large, and ultimately empowered them as rights holders.

37. National consultations should not be single events, but rather lead to the establishment of ongoing processes of communication among different constituencies. That dynamic conception of

consultations would allow participants to gradually become familiar with the relevant issues and provide a powerful incentive for the development of a deeper understanding of rights and measures of redress. Consultation processes also allowed for the inclusion of more stakeholders in discussions about justice issues, but it also allowed them to identify shared experiences, shared needs and shared principles, thereby contributing to social integration and reconciliation. Increased recognition, capacity-building and the opportunity to articulate claims could contribute to the general strengthening of civil society which was essential for redress, reconciliation and prevention.

38. **Ms. Brooke** (United States of America) said that the United States supported legal, judicial and constitutional reforms around the world to safeguard and empower civil society in order to prevent atrocities and foster educational and cultural initiatives that promoted truth and justice. Her delegation would welcome guidance on how to improve interventions.

39. There had been a greater push for the integration of efforts to prevent atrocities in the work of the United Nations, including the Human Rights Council. She wondered what role the mandate could play in prevention efforts, how those working on transitional justice could better collaborate with and support prevention and how the transitional justice community could better demonstrate its effectiveness in stopping cycles of violence. More information on the primary features of a victim-centred approach would also be welcome.

40. **Ms. Kirianoff Crimmins** (Switzerland) said that better cooperation and an exchange of good practices and lessons learned were necessary. There was an urgent need to rethink the goals of consultations in order to ensure the real and informed participation of constituents. Often, the terms truth commission, security sector reform and even transitional justice itself held no meaning for the groups concerned. She asked whether the Special Rapporteur had encountered good practices concerning the use of new technologies and encouraged him to further discuss the role they could play in national consultations, as they could increase the number of people involved and significantly decrease costs.

41. **Mr. Forax** (Observer for the European Union) said that it would be helpful to elaborate on how the objectivity and neutrality of the suggested separate entity for consultations could be guaranteed. He also wished to know what other factors besides security, inclusiveness and capacity-building could have an impact on the consultation process.

42. **Mr. Ruiz Blanco** (Colombia) said that his delegation appreciated the contributions of the Special Rapporteur to the development of a framework for transitional justice, which was very useful to Colombia in its peace negotiations with illegal armed groups. Given the results of the referendum held in October 2016, Colombia was at a crucial time in determining how to implement the peace agreements. The President had expressed his intention to continue the quest for peace and had called on all political and social forces to contribute. A dialogue was being considered to find a national consensus that would allow the country to achieve a stable and lasting peace. He wondered what message the Special Rapporteur could offer Colombia.

43. **Mr. de Greiff** (Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence) said that his report highlighted prior national experiences concerning both consultations and victim participation processes in an attempt to compare those different national experiences, identify some of the challenges and provide some guidance in addressing them.

44. One of the greatest challenges that consultation processes had faced in the past was how to secure the safety of participants, particularly in areas where conflict had recently ended but armed groups still had the capacity to act. The biggest question was how to get victims to come forward and participate in processes in which they were expected to voice their opinion about very controversial topics, which included issues concerning responsibility for the violations that they had suffered and questions about adequate redress. In that context, he had mentioned the use of new media, which allowed for anonymous submissions of both testimonies and proposals to the consultation process. The design of the consultation mechanism should give serious consideration to the fact that some participants would be threatened. It was also important to recognize that new media could not substitute for other traditional forms of consultations.

New media required literacy and access to computers. Face-to-face interactions were also valuable and allowed for the identification of shared experiences and shared principles. While consultations should better integrate new media, they could not rely exclusively on anonymous modes of submission if they were to exploit the full potential of national consultation processes.

45. Instilling trust in the independence, reliability and integrity of the consultation was another challenge. Sri Lanka had recently established a national consultation task force composed entirely of members of civil society, while other countries had set up mixed commissions. When United Nations agencies had played a role in the processes, they had established selection mechanisms, both for national and international participants, in order to guarantee independence and integrity. Those bodies that oversaw consultations had a tremendous amount of power in determining their outcome. The report examined the different methods that had been considered in national consultation processes in an attempt to clarify some of the trade-offs in the design.

46. The success of consultations was also impacted by financial support, which they were often lacking. He encouraged Member States to seriously consider the support that was necessary to ensure that transitional justice measures were designed in a consultative fashion. The most successful national consultation processes also used a variety of methods, ranging from town hall meetings to small, specialized focus groups, and employed different means to poll different constituencies.

47. He had clearly observed, in all of his country visits, that the lack of redress for human rights violations increased the possibility of cycles of violence. Therefore, all of the effective means to provide adequate redress played a role in the prevention of new abuses. In previous reports he had discussed guarantees of non-recurrence and called for more communication between stakeholders that worked in prevention. When they worked in independent silos, there was very little awareness of both the possible synergies and possible tensions between their efforts.

48. He hoped that Colombia could create a system to adequately redress past violations that fully recognized

the efforts made in the peace negotiations and was built on the consensus that had already been achieved in order to prevent more human rights abuses.

Statements made in exercise of the right of reply

49. **Mr. AlKadi** (Saudi Arabia) said that the statement made by the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the response by the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights did not accurately portray the situation in Yemen.

50. **Ms. Matar** (Bahrain) said that she wished to respond to the statement made by the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran during the interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights. The information regarding the increasing marginalization of Shia populations in the Gulf, the demolition of places of worship and changes to place names in Bahrain was inaccurate. Bahrain was committed to ensuring effective protections for freedom of religion and belief, as explicitly protected by articles 18 and 22 of the Constitution, as well as laws that gave fair and equal treatment to individuals, regardless of their faith. Furthermore, new legislation took into account the rights of all citizens, in part through the Shura Council chamber of Parliament, which ensured that all parts of society had a voice in the legislative process and represented groups whose interests might not be otherwise heard.

51. No person faced prosecution in Bahrain on account of their religious beliefs, and there were transparent and effective legal remedies in place to protect those rights. Nevertheless, the Government remained vigilant to protect society from extremism and from those who sought to promote or incite religious hatred. It made no apology for acting lawfully and proportionately to prosecute individuals or groups who misused the religious pulpit to incite violence, hatred or extremism. Any such case was brought only after a thorough investigation and any person charged was afforded his or her full rights of representation and due process before the independent judiciary.

52. **Mr. Ghaebi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that he was surprised that the representative of Bahrain had spoken in exercise of the right of reply in response to the statement made by his delegation, as there had been no mention of Bahrain or any other country in that statement. Moreover, the statement had been prepared

based on the report of the Special Rapporteur, which included facts and figures. If the delegation of Bahrain had wished to respond to the report, it should have posed a question to the Special Rapporteur during the interactive dialogue, rather than misuse the right of reply.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.