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Chair: Mr. Braun (Luxembourg)

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 70: Promotion and protection of human rights (continued)

- (a) **Implementation of human rights instruments** (continued) (A/74/40, A/74/44, A/74/48, A/74/55, A/74/56, A/74/146, A/74/148, A/74/179, A/74/233, A/74/254 and A/74/256)
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- (c) **Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives** (continued) (A/74/166, A/74/188, A/74/196, A/74/268, A/74/273, A/74/275, A/74/276, A/74/278, A/74/303, A/74/311, A/74/342 and A/74/507)
- (d) **Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action** (continued) (A/74/36)

1. **Mr. Lynk** (Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967), introducing his report (A/74/507), said that the Government of Israel had again refused to grant him entry to the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel, continuing its stance of non-cooperation, which served no one's interests and was in breach of one of the fundamental obligations of Member States as laid out in the Charter of the United Nations and in the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations. The Government of Jordan had hosted his mission to the region in July 2019, and human rights defenders, Palestinian Authority officials and United Nations officers had travelled to Amman to meet with him or had contacted him online or in writing. There was, however, no substitute for a country visit, which provided an opportunity to meet with people and organizations on the ground, collect evidence in person and converse with government officials from Israel to learn more from their perspective.

2. The severe humanitarian crisis in Gaza was a human-made catastrophe and the injustice caused by the 12-year-old Israeli air, sea and land blockade of Gaza was a form of collective punishment expressly prohibited under the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. Following three devastating wars and recent serious cuts in humanitarian aid, including aid earmarked for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, four out of five employees in Gaza reportedly worked for less than the minimum wage, per capita real GDP there was now less than half of that in the West Bank, over half of the population of Gaza was food insecure and more than 50 per cent was unemployed, including 70 per cent of Gazans under 30 years old. Furthermore, the health-care system was collapsing, the available water was largely undrinkable and access to electrical power was unreliable. Since March 2018, more than 200 Palestinians, largely unarmed, had been killed by sniper fire and more than 33,000 had been wounded at the Gaza frontier. In March 2019, the commission of inquiry set up in the aftermath reported that nearly all demonstrators killed by Israeli soldiers had been shot in violation of their right to life and in breach of the principle of distinction under international humanitarian law. Nevertheless, Israel had ignored repeated calls for independent and transparent investigations of purported war crimes.

3. The 52-year-old occupation was characterized by two defining features: serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, which had been condemned in multiple resolutions of the United Nations and other international bodies; and a great unwillingness by the international community, in particular the Western industrial nations, to impose any meaningful accountability on Israel for those serious violations. Since the adoption of Security Council resolution 446 (1979), the international community had insisted on full Israeli compliance with the directions of the United Nations, including an end to settlement construction. However, 40 years later, the number of settlers had increased by more than 800 per cent, from 80,000 to 650,000. In its resolution 2334 (2016), the Security Council had called on Israel to immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Nevertheless, in his three most recent quarterly reports to the Security Council, the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority had stated that no steps had been taken to comply with that demand.

4. He had identified three significant sources for the legal obligations that required the international community to jointly marshal its political authority to compel Israel to end its illegal occupation and to remove its barriers to the fulfilment of Palestinian self-determination: (a) common article 1 to the four Geneva Conventions of 1949; (b) the articles on responsibility of States for internationally wrongful acts adopted in 2001; and (c) article 25 of the Charter of the United Nations. In four major reports ([A/HRC/12/48](#), [A/HRC/22/63](#), [A/HRC/29/52](#) and [A/HRC/40/74](#)) commissioned over the past decade by the Human Rights Council, profound breaches of common values were outlined and repeated mentions made of impunity, the lack of accountability and the prevailing culture of exceptionalism. Those reports must not remain on the shelves of collective memory or as footnotes to future reports cataloguing other catastrophes that were not prevented because of unheeded prior demands for accountability. No modern occupation had been conducted with the world so aware of the many grave breaches committed yet so unwilling to employ the tangible and plentiful legal and political tools at its disposal to end the injustice.

5. Two steps that the international community could take to change the situation were as follows: (a) agree upon a complete ban on the export and import of all products made in the illegal Israeli settlements; and (b) call upon the United Nations to complete and release its database on businesses engaged in activities related to the settlements, in a timely and transparent manner. It was time for the international community to turn the key of accountability unlocking the titanium cage that was the endless occupation.

6. **Ms. Rasheed** (Observer for the State of Palestine) said that, in his report, the Special Rapporteur had presented a clear analysis of accountability, impunity and the responsibility of the international community to bring an end to the occupation of Palestine and other Israeli violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. The report reflected the occupying Power's denial, denigration and violation of the rights of the Palestinian people and included recommendations with regard to international accountability to end the illegal occupation.

7. The long list of systematic and incessant violations committed by Israel against the Palestinian civilian population in occupied Palestine were well known, and indicated just how pervasive they were, sustaining and entrenching the illegal occupation, in direct contravention and grave breach of international humanitarian and criminal law and relevant United Nations resolutions. Nevertheless, and despite the great

deal of power that the international community had to ensure a positive, durable and just solution to end the occupation, the acute lack of accountability and abundant impunity characterizing the conduct of the five-decades-long occupation not only continued but had intensified.

8. The State of Palestine would study the many important recommendations made by the Special Rapporteur and noted in particular, in addition to the call on Israel to end the occupation, the direct call upon the international community to take all measures necessary to ensure its end. She enquired what that would require in practice and what form the relevant countermeasures and sanctions might take. She also requested the Special Rapporteur to expand more on his other recommendations, in particular with regard to seeking an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice and commissioning a United Nations study on the legality of the annexation and the continued occupation of Palestinian territory.

9. Her delegation once again condemned the refusal of Israel to cooperate with the mandate of the Special Rapporteur and called on the Secretary-General, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and Member States to take measures to ensure that his mandate was not obstructed and that Israel was brought into compliance.

10. **Mr. Poveda Brito** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), speaking on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, said that the Movement again reaffirmed its support for the Palestinian people and reiterated its condolences for the suffering that they had endured since 1967 under the permanent military occupation by Israel, which continued to deny them their fundamental human rights, including the right to self-determination. The Movement condemned the critical and unsustainable situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as well as the ongoing brutal military campaign, human rights violations and war crimes committed by the occupying Power, in violation of international law and United Nations resolutions. The time had come to remedy that historic injustice. At the Ministerial Meeting of the Coordinating Bureau of the Movement, held in Caracas in July 2019, attendees had expressed their profound concern for the worsening humanitarian crisis in the region, which had left more than 2 million Palestinians isolated and besieged owing to an illegal blockade that had lasted more than a decade.

11. **Mr. Roscoe** (United Kingdom) said that the lack of access to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory hindered the Special Representative's work

and the Third Committee's ability to assess the human rights situation there. Concerned about the ongoing violence across Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the United Kingdom strongly condemned terrorist attacks and violence against civilians, as well as violations of human rights and international law in the context of the occupation, including settlement advancements and the demolition of Palestinian homes. It also condemned human rights abuses committed by the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and by the de facto Hamas authorities in Gaza. His delegation was concerned both about the potential annexation of any part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which would be contrary to international law and damaging to peace efforts, and about the humanitarian situation in Gaza and the impact of Israeli restrictions on the lives of Palestinians. The United Kingdom remained committed to a two-State solution with regard to the Middle East peace process and urged the Palestinian Authority and Hamas to renew their reconciliation efforts in support of a long-term political solution.

12. **Mr. Pontiroli** (Observer for the European Union) said that the European Union remained committed to a comprehensive resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, through a two-State solution and an agreement to end the occupation, meet the security needs of both parties and fulfil Palestinian aspirations for statehood and sovereignty, on the basis of relevant Security Council resolutions and internationally agreed parameters. His delegation would continue to work with both parties and with regional and international partners towards the resumption of meaningful negotiations to resolve all final status issues and achieve a just and lasting peace.

13. Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, were illegal under international law, constituted a significant obstacle to peace and threatened prospects for a two-State solution. In the light of recent and increasing violence in Gaza, including the firing of rockets into Israel, as well as in the West Bank, it was essential to restore a political horizon for peace between Israelis and Palestinians in order to contain extremism, which could exacerbate the risk to the whole region. Recalling the special significance of the holy sites in Jerusalem, his delegation called for upholding the status quo put in place in 1967 for the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif. Sustainable solutions to the conflicts in the Middle East could be found only through multilateral cooperation.

14. The European Union strongly supported the work of the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and commended his efforts to alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. The real challenge lay in

the lack of implementation of agreed policies and the failure to enforce international law. He asked the Special Rapporteur to share his current priorities.

15. **Ms. Fareena** (Maldives) said that respect for the rule of law and the upholding of international obligations were the cornerstones of world peace and security. The continuing violence and constant expansion of settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem were of deep concern, as was the deteriorating human rights situation and ongoing humanitarian crisis in the State of Palestine. The plight of Palestinians and their right to self-determination remained an international priority, with the illegal occupation of Palestine, the annexation of Jerusalem and the shift of the capital of Israel to Jerusalem clear violations of international law that had been repeatedly condemned by Member States. Maldives reiterated its call for an internationally agreed two-State solution, with an independent and sovereign State of Palestine based on 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living in peace and prosperity. The international community must ensure respect for the human rights of those living under occupation, including their right to be free from fear and oppression. Her delegation joined the call on Israel to grant access to the Special Representative without further delay.

16. **Mr. Othman** (Malaysia) said that efforts to protect and promote the human rights and dignity of Palestinians were not charity but a responsibility of the international community. Malaysia urged Israel to end violations of international human rights and humanitarian law by its security forces against Palestinians, including women and children. Israel had an obligation to investigate alleged violations and to prosecute those responsible. He asked how Member States and the international community could best assist in ensuring accountability and reparations for violations committed by Israel, in addition to the recommendations proposed in the report.

17. **Mr. Hassani Nejad Pirkouhi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the illegal land and sea blockade imposed on Gaza for more than 12 years, the ensuing humanitarian crisis and the ongoing collective punishment of civilians had created excruciating living conditions for Palestinians. Almost all of the basic human rights of the Palestinian people were being violated, owing to aggressive Israeli policies and continued unlawful Israeli settlement activities in the West Bank and East Jerusalem and in the occupied Syrian Golan. That situation was exacerbating an already coercive environment, with many Palestinians living under the threat of demolition orders and displacement and exposed to harassment by illegal

settlers and unabated violence by Israeli security forces, with absolute impunity.

18. The ongoing atrocities committed against Palestinians could not happen without the support of the United States of America and inaction by the international community. Illegal measures such as the moving of the United States Embassy to Jerusalem and the imposition of Israeli jurisdiction or administration on occupied territories were null and void and without international legal effect.

19. **Ms. Ní Chonchúir** (Ireland) said that the continued expansion of Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory through the demolition of Palestinian communities, the deliberate clearing of land and the forced transfer of residents, was a clear breach of international law that undermined the possibility of a two-State solution and had serious implications for international humanitarian law and human rights.

20. Deeply concerned about the lesser legal protections afforded to Palestinians in detention and facing trial, especially in cases involving minors and the use of administrative detention, her delegation called on Israel to ensure full respect for international human rights obligations towards all prisoners, including under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and for its full cooperation with the Special Rapporteur, including by facilitating visits to the Occupied Palestinian Territory. She wondered whether the ill-treatment and torture of Palestinian detainees were continuing and whether those responsible been held to account. She enquired about developments in the treatment of human rights defenders, civil society actors and lawyers, and what the international community could do to counter shrinking civil space in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

21. **Mr. Vorobiev** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation was concerned that the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was continuing to degrade. It condemned any coercive actions that would exacerbate the situation in the region as a whole and once again called upon the parties to refrain from steps that could lead to a spiral of violence.

22. His delegation reaffirmed its position on the indivisibility and legal status of the Palestinian Territories and expressed its opposition to the unilateral actions carried out by Israel, including continuing unlawful settlement activity, the blockade of Gaza and the policy of expelling Palestinians and demolishing their homes. Such actions which were not only illegal under international law but were also serious obstacles

to the establishment of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

23. The protracted conflict was one of the reasons for radicalization and terrorism in the region. It was therefore necessary to redouble efforts to settle the conflict, which could only be achieved on the basis of the relevant international legal framework, including Security Council resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative, and through direct negotiations between the parties without any preliminary conditions. The two-State formula was the only realistic way to end the confrontation.

24. **Mr. Faye** (Senegal) said that the persistent human rights violations and lack of respect for international humanitarian and human rights law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, were regrettable. His delegation echoed calls for urgent international attention to be paid to ending the situation and for the full implementation of the terms of Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#). Senegal strongly condemned the continuation of settlements and annexations, as well as the illegal blockade of Gaza, which deprived the Palestinian people of their most fundamental rights. It was crucial to establish a clear policy for Palestinian independence, within the 1967 borders, side by side with Israel in peace and security. Expressing its full support for the entire Palestinian people, his delegation urged the international community, including Israel, to redouble its efforts to improve cooperation with the Special Rapporteur, and to respect and ensure respect for its commitments.

25. **Ms. Wollebaek** (Norway) said that her delegation was particularly concerned about reports of ongoing violence and intimidation by the settler population towards Palestinians in Hebron, which could not be allowed to continue with impunity, as such developments threatened prospects for a negotiated two-State solution. While Israel bore considerable responsibility for the human rights abuses under discussion, the Palestinian Authority also needed to intensify efforts to fulfil its own international human rights obligations. Her delegation also remained deeply concerned about human rights abuses committed in Hamas-controlled Gaza, including by its security forces. Urging Israel to grant access to the Special Rapporteur so that he could fully carry out his mandate, her delegation sought ideas on the best ways to maintain and enhance the progress made over the past year.

26. **Ms. Cue Delgado** (Cuba) said that the policies applied against the Palestinian people contravened United Nations resolutions and international and

humanitarian law and constituted a threat to international peace and security by depriving the Palestinian people of their fundamental human rights. The humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip in particular required the urgent attention and support of the international community. Only the end of the colonization and occupation of Arab territories, the liberation of Palestinian prisoners and the recognition of the legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people would lead to a meaningful political process that provided a just and lasting peace for all peoples of the region.

27. **Ms. Ali** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the main cause of the conflict in the Middle East was the threat to peace and stability resulting from the Israeli occupation of the Arab territories, including the Syrian Arab Golan, and not any religious or ethnic reason fabricated by some to destroy the region, redraw the borders and weaken the people. The absence of accountability or any mechanism to implement the relevant international resolutions had led to the continuing occupation and ongoing crimes against the people in the occupied Arab territories. Recognition by the United States of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and references to Israeli sovereignty over the occupied Syrian Golan constituted the crime of the century. Anyone calling into question the report on activities in the region and the continued Israeli occupation of the Golan and the Arab territories had fallen victim to naive illusory practices.

28. **Mr. Kyong** Hyok Choe (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that the current ongoing systematic and grave human rights violations in Arab territories, including Palestine, raised increasingly serious concerns among international community. The persistent denial by Israel of Palestinians' rights to self-determination was a serious and unjustifiable violation of international humanitarian and human rights law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. The deliberate cover-up of human rights violations was a typical example of politization, selectivity and double standards that misused human rights issues for the sake of political interests. National independence and sovereignty were essential preconditions for the enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. His delegation strongly urged an immediate end to Israeli human rights abuses in the occupied Arab territories.

29. **Ms. Xu** Daizhu (China) said that the question of Palestine was a root cause of the situation in the Middle East and must be at the heart of the international agenda. China called upon both Israel and Palestine to maintain calm and restraint, respect the other's right to existence, refrain from resorting to force and avoid indiscriminate attacks on innocent civilians. The relevant General

Assembly and Human Rights Council resolutions must be effectively implemented. The relevant parties must lift the blockade of Gaza immediately and create the necessary conditions for Palestine to develop its economy and improve livelihoods.

30. The independent establishment of a State was an inalienable right of the Palestinian people. Members of the international community, in particular those with influence on both parties, must adhere to the two-State solution, be guided by international consensus, the relevant United Nations resolutions and the principle of land for peace, and listen to the perspectives of the relevant parties, especially on the Palestinian side. In addressing the peace process in the Middle East, differences must be resolved through dialogue on an equal footing. China firmly supported the just cause of the Palestinian people in their efforts to restore their legitimate rights and all efforts to ease the situation in Palestine and Israel. His delegation remained ready to work with the international community to promote a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the conflict.

31. **Mr. Koba** (Indonesia) said that the report of the Special Rapporteur reflected the deterioration in the human rights and humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories, outlined the immense challenges involved in remedying the conditions on the ground and underscored that, without addressing the root cause of the problem, namely their lack of self-determination, the suffering of the Palestinian people would not end. Israeli actions, including rampant illegal settlement in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and reports of Palestinians killed or injured by settlers, or their property damaged, were a clear violation of the occupying Power's obligation to abide by international law and all relevant United Nations resolutions. The international community must act together to stop such actions and must stand by the Palestinian people by providing material and technical assistance to find a lasting solution for Palestine. His delegation affirmed its unequivocal support for the two-State solution based on United Nations resolutions and internationally agreed parameters. He enquired what the international community, including the United Nations, could do to help the Palestinian people to gain self-determination.

32. **Mr. Almadhi** (Saudi Arabia) said that the rights of the Palestinian people, in particular the right to self-determination, were inalienable. It was necessary to end the occupation and establish an independent State of Palestine, with the full and immediate implementation of sovereignty over territorial rights and the right to return, in accordance with international instruments. Israel had declined its legal responsibility, as the

occupying Power, to abide by international law and respect the interests of the people under occupation for more than five decades, during which time national properties had been looted and illegally expropriated. The sequestration of Palestinian water resources was also a violation of international humanitarian and human rights law, specifically the right to water. Saudi Arabia reaffirmed the need to address the root causes that prolonged the conflict in order to end the occupation.

33. **Mr. Lynk** (Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967) said that the essential message from Israeli, Palestinian, regional and international civil society was that the international community must go beyond criticism to actually enforcing consequences for the continuation of the occupation, which would end only with decisive intervention by the international community to fulfil its own legal obligations to bring the violations of humanitarian and human rights law to an end. His report included recommendations drawn from best practices articulated by the International Committee of the Red Cross on how to bring an outlier, defiant State back into compliance with international law, including the application of retorsion measures, the adoption of lawful countermeasures, referral to a competent international body or tribunal or the use of penal measures to repress violations. In addition, the right of universal jurisdiction could be exercised to bring purported perpetrators to justice if they were found in any of the many countries that had already integrated the Geneva Conventions and the Rome Statute into their national laws.

34. In 2017, the then-United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights had recommended that the General Assembly use its power to seek an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice on whether the Israeli occupation had crossed the line into illegality and on which measures the international community was allowed and obliged to take to bring an offending and defiant State into compliance with international law. In preparation for requesting such an advisory opinion, the General Assembly should commission a study as to whether that line had actually been crossed, as a means for hastening the end of the Israeli occupation, on the basis of the four cornerstones of law on the conduct of an occupation by an occupying Power, namely: that it must be temporary; that none of the territory occupied could be annexed; that it must be conducted in good faith; and that all international laws and directions from the United Nations and other respected international bodies must be followed.

35. In his report of March 2020 to the Human Rights Council, he would most likely address the issue of

collective punishment as a defining feature of the Israeli occupation, in particular as a violation of the fourth Geneva Convention. In his October 2020 report to the General Assembly, he would propose practical measures that the international community could take with regard to accountability.

36. **Mr. Rehman** (Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran), introducing his report (A/74/188), said that he had held useful meetings with representatives from the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran during his visits to Geneva and had received replies to several communications sent. He looked forward to continued dialogue with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the human rights situation in the country, but regretted that his requests to visit had been refused. Over the past year, the economic situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran had continued to decline, worsened by the impact of sanctions, while those calling for the protection of and respect for human rights had been intimidated, harassed, arrested and detained. In his report, he provided an overview of the most pressing human rights issues observed during that time, with a focused analysis on the situation of ethnic and religious minorities.

37. Concerns included the continuing use of the death penalty, with at least 173 executions carried out to date in 2019 alone, including two 17-year-olds, and the numerous child offenders still on death row, despite international human rights law prohibiting the imposition of capital punishment on anyone committing a crime while under 18 years of age. He was, however, encouraged by the enhanced dialogue between OHCHR and the Iranian authorities on the administration of justice and child offender executions.

38. Of further grave concern were the ongoing curtailment of basic rights, including the right to freedom of assembly and association, in particular against workers, teachers, students, minorities and women. The cases of Nasrin Sotoudeh, an Iranian lawyer sentenced to prison and corporal punishment for defending women charged with protesting the compulsory hijab, and Aras Amiri, an Iranian artist detained in connection with her work for the British Council in London, and the disproportionate number of political prisoners and executions among members of ethnic and religious minorities, in particular human rights and cultural activists from those communities, were emblematic of those issues.

39. A recent change allowing women to attend football matches was welcome, but broad discrimination against women persisted in law and practice. Meanwhile,

bilateral exchanges with the Government had led to the release of three foreign or dual nationals in 2019, but many remained arbitrarily detained, despite his call for their immediate release. Targeted recommendations had also been formulated to address the grave human rights concerns of minorities, including discriminatory legislation and practices affecting ethnic minorities and religious minorities, in accordance with international human rights law.

40. **Mr. Hassani Nejad Pirkouhi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his country's situation was not, and had never been, before the Committee for the sake of human rights. The report, the mandate and the "show" just repeated had nothing to do with human rights, and any claim to the contrary was patently false. Such charades would dissipate as soon as Iran changed gears in its relationship with the United States and altered its position on the Israeli apartheid and occupation. The self-appointed guardians of global virtues behind the mandate were themselves becoming increasingly like dictators, through xenophobic attacks on vulnerable communities such as migrants and Muslims and through their contempt for free media, truth and the rule of law and all other democratic values. His delegation's deep mistrust of accepting advice on human rights from racists, colonialists and dictators posing as the defenders of human rights in Iran was therefore understandable. The rage against and ruthless demonization of Iranians today was not related to human rights but to their having selected unpalatable leaders who could no longer be deposed at the convenience of the United States. Daring to practice democracy with outcomes unfavourable to United States interests was to risk an all-out attack, akin to the genocidal economic terrorism it waged against Iranians.

41. With regard to the focus of the report on minorities in Iran, Iranians had coexisted in peace and harmony for millenniums, viewing their varied languages, beliefs and ethnicities as natural to the culture and history of Persians. The highest political authority in Iran came from an Azeri linguistic minority group, the head of the national security council was an Arab, and each expert at the Permanent Mission in New York was from a different cultural and linguistic background. It was Iran itself that bound Iranians to each other, through common dreams, values, joys and griefs. Such realities were difficult to comprehend for those who lived in communities filled with hateful attitudes and racial and ethnic discrimination. Massive fortunes had been funnelled by the United States to manufacture non-existent ethnic and religious conflict within Iran as part of its strategy against Iranians. Terrorists who until recently were on the terror lists of Western countries had

now become allies in the evil campaign against Iranians. It was abhorrent to glorify criminals, whose hands were stained with the blood of civilians and law enforcement officers, as victims of ethnic or religious discrimination. It would be a tragedy if the United Nations submitted to such coercive schemes.

42. The entire report was marred by the mandate holder's personal biases and fundamentally flawed because of the inclusion of fake news and repeated opinionated interpretations of laws, in particular regarding the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Furthermore, the activities of the Special Rapporteur over the past 12 months reflected his disrespect for the Charter of the United Nations, which contained unequivocal recognition of the equal sovereignty of Member States, as well as for the impartiality and professionalism required under the Code of Conduct for Special Procedures Mandate-holders of the Human Rights Council. The gravity of the specific cases raised in the report, which been addressed separately and in detail by the authorities, was no greater than similar cases seen in most countries and did not warrant country-specific reports or resolutions. Iranians neither hid nor denied their shortcomings, but discussed them openly and went to the ballot box to seek consensual, genuine and sustainable improvements. What they needed least was human rights advice from opportunistic hypocrites.

43. **The Chair** said that criticism of the content of reports was welcome, but requested that delegates not call into question the integrity of the Special Rapporteur.

44. **Mr. Hassani Nejad Pirkouhi** (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on a point of order, said that his delegation had delivered a factual statement and was not interested in hearing the Chair's personal views. The Chair should remain impartial and neutral with regard to the proceedings of the session.

45. **Mr. Sigurdsson** (Iceland) said that his delegation was concerned about ongoing discrimination against and systematic harassment of religious and ethnic minorities, arrests of women human rights defenders protesting the compulsory use of the hijab and the intimidation of journalists and media workers both inside and outside of Iran. While Iceland called on all States to end capital punishment, the practice was particularly abhorrent in Iran, where the crimes committed often seemed far from warranting such a gruesome consequence. Especially objectionable were death sentences against child offenders, despite the explicit prohibition contained in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which had been ratified by Iran. He asked the Special Rapporteur to elaborate on the most

urgent and feasible steps, and the possible role of international partners, towards ending capital punishment for minors in Iran.

46. **Mr. Arbeiter** (Canada) said that, despite incremental progress made by Iran in some areas, his delegation remained deeply concerned about the numerous cases of arbitrary arrest and detention, ongoing discrimination against women and members of ethnic and religious minorities, violations of the rights to freedom of opinion, expression and assembly, in particular against labour and women's rights advocates, and executions of child offenders. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran should engage constructively with the international community, including by allowing the Special Rapporteur to visit the country soon. He enquired how the international community should address concerns about the arbitrary arrest and detention of foreign and dual nationals in Iran and whether the Special Rapporteur planned to incorporate the recommendations made to Iran at its universal periodic review presentation in 2019 into his engagement with the Government.

47. **Ms. Lendenmann Winterberg** (Switzerland) said that her country, which strongly condemned the use of the death penalty, welcomed the reduction in executions in Iran, but called upon the Government to further reduce their number and to commute all existing sentences imposed on child offenders. Her delegation called welcomed the recent changes allowing women to attend public football matches but remained concerned about discrimination against recognized and unrecognized ethnic and religious minorities, the treatment of human rights defenders and the detention of numerous dual nationals without access to consular assistance. She called on the authorities to respect, protect and guarantee the rights and fundamental freedoms of all and to continue its efforts towards achieving gender equality.

48. **Mr. Poveda Brito** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), speaking on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, said that attendees at the 2019 Ministerial Meeting of the Coordinating Bureau had reaffirmed the importance of and commitment to the promotion of universal and effective respect for and protection of all universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. Human rights were universal, inalienable, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated and must be tackled at the international level, through constructive, equitable and objective dialogue, with respect for national sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of States. The Movement also expressed its

profound concern for the continued proliferation of selective country-specific resolutions adopted by the Third Committee and the Human Rights Council, which served to exploit human rights for political ends. The universal periodic review was the primary intergovernmental mechanism for examining human rights-related questions at the national level, with the cooperation, support and participation of the country concerned.

49. **Ms. Ni Chonchúir** (Ireland) said that her country was deeply concerned about the continued use of the death penalty in Iran, in particular against juvenile offenders. Her delegation called upon the Government of that country to establish a moratorium on executions, with a view to abolishing the death penalty, and to urgently amend legislation to prohibit the execution of child offenders, in accordance with its obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Ireland was especially concerned about increasing restrictions on the right to freedom of expression and violations of the rights to life, liberty and a fair trial, including the continued harassment, arrest and arbitrary detention of various groups, in particular women human rights defenders, as a consequence of engaging in peaceful protest. She requested an update on the case of Ms. Sotoudeh and asked whether the Special Rapporteur expected to see any progress with regard to receiving permission to enter Iran for monitoring visits.

50. **Mr. Bourtembourg** (Observer for the European Union) said that the European Union was encouraged by the positive commitments and actions taken by the Islamic Republic of Iran, including the nearly 50 per cent decrease in executions from 2017 to 2018 and the significant impact of legislative amendments made in 2017. Despite the continued falling trend in 2019, however, executions in the country still numbered in the hundreds, with the death penalty still imposed for a wide range of offenses, including against juvenile offenders. His delegation requested that the Special Rapporteur elaborate further on the specific recommendations made in that regard in his March 2019 report to the Human Rights Council, and on their follow-up, and provide information on the situation of women and girls, especially women human rights defenders, on incidents of child and early forced marriage and on consular cooperation.

51. **Mr. Erdman** (United States of America) said that his delegation remained gravely concerned about the human rights situation in Iran and urged its Government to protect the human rights of minorities, including the right to freedom of religion or belief, as well as freedoms of association, expression and peaceful assembly, which were deteriorating. His delegation

deplored the targeting, intimidation and arrests of members of certain groups, the jailing of some 700 prisoners of conscience through unfair trials and the harassment of and lengthy prison terms imposed on women for wearing what they wanted. The Government should release the human rights defenders whom it had arbitrarily detained.

52. **Mr. Dunkel** (Germany) said that, although his country recognized the decrease in executions in Iran, it was deeply worried about the continued use of the death penalty, the use of which was a violation of the right to life and human dignity, especially against juvenile offenders, and a clear breach of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and international human rights standards. His delegation urged Iran to lift all death verdicts handed down to minors and to consider alternative punishments as provided for by Iranian law. Iran was under the international obligation to respect the human rights of all detainees, including their right to a fair trial, unrestricted access to legal counsel of their choice, contact with their families and humane treatment in prison, including adequate health care. His delegation was also very concerned about the situation of women in Iran and urged the Government to release all women detained for their work as human rights defenders and to respect their rights to freedom of association, expression and assembly.

53. **Ms. Cue Delgado** (Cuba) said that the Special Rapporteur's mandate had clearly not been established in the cooperative and respectful spirit that should be inherent to forums on human rights. The insistence on advancing selective and manipulative initiatives without the consent of the State under consideration and without taking into account actions taken by that State to maintain good relations with human rights mechanisms was hindering international cooperation. Member States should work together to prevent such actions from continuing to obstruct the worldwide promotion of human rights. Iran must be permitted sufficient space to address any challenges it may face, and its efforts in that regard should be recognized.

54. **Ms. Ali** (Syrian Arab Republic) asked the Special Rapporteur whether he considered that attending or sending video messages to events held by countries or non-governmental organizations that had specific political problems with Iran was in line with maintaining his impartiality; whether such activities were viewed as helping to improve human rights situations; and whether they were in line with the Charter-confirmed sovereignty of Member States. She queried whether he had considered issuing an individual or joint statement to address the impacts of unilateral coercive measures on the human rights of civilians in

Iran and what he had done in his capacity to implement the 2018 International Court of Justice order on the issue. She wondered what specific measures could be taken to alleviate the impacts of the recently augmented unilateral sanctions by the United States on the human rights of civilians in Iran and what measures could be taken to redress the grievances of Iranian civilian victims of those measures and to hold those responsible accountable.

55. **Ms. Příkrylová** (Czechia) said that her delegation encouraged the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to continue its increasingly constructive engagement with OHCHR and to allow entry to the Special Rapporteur for monitoring visits and cooperation purposes. Her delegation remained deeply concerned about the continued use of the death penalty, in particular against children and alleged child offenders, which was a violation of commitments made by Iran in ratifying both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Her delegation also remained concerned about many other human rights violations, such as increasing restrictions on the rights to freedom of expression, liberty and a fair trial, and reprisals against human rights defenders and activists, including women, minorities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons, journalists and trade unionists.

56. **Mr. Roscoe** (United Kingdom) said that, as opposed to the elaborate smokescreen presented in his statement today, the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran might instead try to engage with the constructive recommendations in the report of the Special Rapporteur. Appointed by the Human Rights Council, the Special Rapporteur deserved the respect of both the Third Committee and Iran. The United Kingdom shared concerns about the arbitrary detention of dual and foreign nationals, journalists and human rights defenders, as well as about violations of the right to freedom of religion or belief, and urged Iranian authorities to guarantee due process and fair trials for all and to ensure that members of religious and ethnic minorities were treated equally before the law and allowed to participate fully in society. He asked the Special Rapporteur what measures the Government should implement to ensure those guarantees. His delegation called on the Government of Iran to grant access to the Special Rapporteur and other special procedure mandate holders so that they could conduct monitoring visits and engage more fully on issues raised by Iranians.

57. **Mr. Kyong Hyok Choe** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that his delegation strongly opposed country-specific mandates, which were

politically motivated and confrontational. Human rights issues should be discussed in an impartial manner through the universal periodic review process of the Human Rights Council. The illegal and inhuman unilateral coercive measures imposed by some countries had seriously affected the well-being of all Iranians and should be questioned and discussed as a priority. His delegation extended its support to the Government and people of the Islamic Republic of Iran for their struggle to defend their sovereignty and right to existence.

58. **Ms. Xu Daizhu** (China) said that his country welcomed the efforts and progress made by the Government of Iran to promote and protect human rights, in particular given the challenges Iran faced in that regard as a developing country, and welcomed recent legislation to protect the rights of children, young people and persons with disabilities. Her delegation noted with concern the negative impact of the unilateral coercive measures on the human rights situation in Iran, which should be viewed by the international community in an objective and impartial manner. In the light of the recent escalation of tensions in the Gulf region, the Iranian nuclear issue should be taken back to the track of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action so that the countries of the region could build a platform for dialogue and consultation and play a constructive role in promoting regional security. China had always stood for constructive dialogue and cooperation.

59. **Mr. Yarkovich** (Belarus) said that country-specific special procedures were counterproductive to achieving progress in human rights. The United Nations currently had an effective mechanism for reviewing compliance by Member States with their human rights obligations. The universal periodic review provided a careful analysis of the human rights situation in each country and was the best way to encourage States to work on such issues in their countries. His delegation wished the Iranian delegation every success in the third cycle of its review in November 2019 and reiterated its opposition to the politicization of human rights issues in specific countries.

60. **Ms. Gebrekidan** (Eritrea) said that the present country-specific approach was not based on genuine concern for human rights but was politically motivated and therefore counterproductive. Given that no country had fulfilled all of its human rights obligations or was free of violations, none had the moral authority to engage in finger pointing. The effective promotion of human rights could only be advanced through universal, objective and non-selective international cooperation, conducted in a fair and equal manner with respect for national sovereignty. The universal periodic review, aimed at enhancing cooperation and partnership in the

promotion of rights, therefore remained the best platform. Eritrea reaffirmed its commitment to redoubling its own efforts in the promotion of rights and remained opposed to politicization and double standards with regard to human rights issues.

61. **Mr. Lobo** (Norway) said that his country deplored the ongoing discrimination against and intimidation of ethnic and religious minorities in Iran; the high number of executions still being carried out there, despite legislative amendments made in 2017; the continued use of the death penalty on child offenders; the increasing restrictions on freedom of expression, including imprisonments of trade unionists and other labour activists; and the continuing arrests of and threats against human rights defenders, who were serving prison sentences based on insufficiently defined criteria. His delegation urged the Iranian authorities to fulfil their obligations under international human rights law and to cooperate fully with the Special Rapporteur by allowing him to visit to Iran. He wondered about the likelihood of the Special Rapporteur establishing a constructive dialogue with the Iranian authorities.

62. **Ms. Ndayishimiye** (Burundi) said that all consideration of human rights must be predicated on impartial recognition of the State as having the primary role in protecting its citizens. Burundi was therefore opposed to country-specific mandates, which institutionalized selectivity, compromised the establishment of constructive dialogue and cooperation and complicated the work of mandate holders. The universal periodic review was the best mechanism for ensuring an impartial and balanced assessment in that regard. The type of progress shown in the responses of the Government of Iran to communications by the Special Rapporteur should be encouraged.

63. **Mr. Vorobiev** (Russian Federation), reiterating her Government's disapproval of the politicized consideration of national human rights situations by United Nations bodies, said that placing the Islamic Republic of Iran under unmoderated scrutiny ran counter to the principles of equal cooperation, neutrality and objectivity that underpinned international efforts to promote and protect human rights. Taking a holier-than-thou attitude had never furthered the cause of human rights, while politically-motivated mudslinging discredited United Nations bodies. Instead of isolating individual States, the international community should draw them into a respectful dialogue on human rights. The Islamic Republic of Iran had repeatedly demonstrated its readiness to engage constructively with United Nations human rights bodies and such resolve should be encouraged in every way.

64. **Mr. Yamaura** (Japan) said that his Government regularly engaged in, and would continue to hold, constructive bilateral discussions with Iran on human rights developments in that country and on international cooperation on human rights. While some progress had been made by Iran in the protection and promotion of rights of persons with disabilities, his delegation would appreciate the Special Rapporteur's views on further developing a cooperative relationship with the country.

65. **Mr. Zulqarnain** (Pakistan) said that the promotion of human rights was a shared responsibility that could only be achieved through cooperation and inclusion, rather than politicization and selectivity. The cooperation by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran with the universal periodic review process, the treaty bodies and OHCHR was reflective of its commitment to engage constructively with international mechanisms. As all human rights were universal, inalienable, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, human rights issues should be addressed through a constructive, non-confrontational, non-politicized and non-selective approach, in a fair, equal and objective manner, with respect for national sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of States. There was a need for greater coherence between the work of the Third Committee and the Human Rights Council to avoid duplication. The universal periodic review was the main intergovernmental mechanism for reviewing human rights issues at the national level.

66. **Mr. Rehman** (Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran) said that he welcomed the statement by representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as well as the Government's response to his reports and communications and its engagement in that regard, and repeated his request to allow him to visit Iran in order to fully complete his mandate. With respect to his substantive mandate and its focus on human rights issues, his work was based on the resolution under which he was authorized to operate and was fully in accordance with the Code of Conduct. Any responses should therefore be based exclusively on his activities while carrying out that mandate. He would be grateful for fuller engagement by the Islamic Republic of Iran on the de facto and de jure religious discrimination that existed in its Constitution.

67. He was gravely concerned about the huge number of executions and offences that potentially carried death sentences, in particular the continuing executions of child offenders, and urged Member States to examine the various detailed recommendations made in his report to the Human Rights Council ([A/HRC/40/67](#)) on how to prevent and prohibit such executions. He requested an absolute and immediate moratorium on, and the

eventual prohibition of, executions of any child offender and recommended that the Islamic Republic of Iran withdraw its reservation to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and eliminate discrimination against children, in particular with regard to girls. Key concerns in that regard included the notion of criminal responsibility, whereby girls could potentially be executed at the age of 9, and boys at the age of 15. He also strongly urged the Government to change its legislation on child marriages, under which girls as young as 9 years of age could still be married, to bring it into line with international human rights law.

68. Deeply concerned about the enforcement of the wearing of the hijab and the disproportionate reaction from the authorities against women who protested against it, including imprisonment and huge fines, he urged the Islamic Republic of Iran to stop that practice as well. Ms. Sotoudeh was reportedly still in prison, but he continued to monitor her situation and expected to make progress in that regard when he visited the country. He also requested the immediate release of all foreign and dual nationals, as there was substantial evidence of arbitrary trials and detentions and violations of international human rights law, in particular the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,, including a failure of due process and significant evidence of false confessions, torture and the use of people as pawns for political ends.

69. Regarding the universal periodic review, he urged Member States to examine the detailed recommendations in his various reports. He was consistently in discussion with several States as to how to best follow up on, and have his recommendations incorporated into, that mechanism. With regard to sanctions, a significant issue of grave concern raised by several delegations, the Islamic Republic of Iran faced serious economic challenges, reinforced by the reimposition of sanctions by the United States in 2018. His report contained explicit references to the negative impact of sanctions on all sectors of economy, with the greatest risk being to the most vulnerable members of society, in particular in relation to access to health care and essential medicines. Nevertheless, sanctions were only one factor in the economic decline, as evidenced by the fact that protests had begun well before the imposition of sanctions. He urged the Islamic Republic of Iran to provide fuller and more specific information on the matter and to allow him to visit the country so that he could gain a better view of how society and communities were dealing with those sanctions.

70. **Mr. Hassani Nejad Pirkouhi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that countries whose communities were awash with racism, whose histories were marred by the

uprooting of indigenous peoples, colonialism, torture and pre-emptive wars and whose politics were based on deception and hypocrisy had no right to lecture others on human rights. It was absurd to imagine that those same countries, whose military complexes had been the cause of militarization and whose interventions were the source of radicalization, cared about human rights in Iran or elsewhere. Those countries were naturals at abusing human rights, which were just another convenient means in their policy toolbox for exerting maximum pressure on their adversaries. That was why, when the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 had presented his report, the representatives of the United States, Canada, Germany and others had not said a word about the official apartheid practised on a daily basis by Israel. Iran, however, had been brought before the Committee through a purely politicized mandate, to impose costs, apply counter-pressure and allegedly regain the strategic initiative, but not for the sake of human rights.

71. **The Chair** invited the Committee to engage in a general discussion on the item.

72. **Ms. Moutchou** (Morocco) said that her country reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to the achievement of respect for and the consolidation of human rights, both nationally and internationally. Morocco had made consistent efforts, in particular over the past two decades, to improve the performance of its institutions and consolidate its legislation so as to improve the lives of its citizens. Its inclusive and participative approach to human rights had its legal basis in the Constitution, in which the nation's commitments to global peace and security, pluralism and gender parity and equality were enshrined.

73. Morocco had acceded to all the international conventions and agreements related to human rights and had recognized the primacy of those instruments by incorporating them into its national laws. The Government had undertaken significant reforms to revitalize human rights in the country, reflecting its desire to build on lessons learned and to enhance its engagement with the human rights system. It had extended 14 invitations to special procedure mandate holders and had received 11 visits.

74. Since the 1990s, public institutions had been established to promote cultural diversity and respect for human rights and to consolidate existing judicial and administrative structures. The national human rights commission was a pluralistic and independent institution whose operations were in line with the principles relating to the status of national institutions

for the promotion and protection of human rights. The school curriculum promoted the diversity of Moroccan culture and its openness to different regional and international cultures, while reflecting the universal values and principles governing human rights. Decision-making positions had been opened to women by royal decree in 2006, and they were also represented in the council of Islamic scholars (ulama). The Government had also recently put in place a national strategy for young people, public policies for the protection of children and persons with disabilities and a new immigration and asylum policy.

75. **Ms. González López** (El Salvador) said that the composition of societies worldwide was, and always had been, the result of multidimensional migratory flows, the rates of which depended on various factors. El Salvador was committed to building a culture of respect for the protection and promotion of human rights through the use of existing mechanisms. Opposed to the criminalization of migrants, its Government advocated a comprehensive approach to international migration and viewed detentions, family separations and the lack of due process or access to justice as human rights violations. States should take advantage of the opportunity to benefit from international migration by working together to tackle the challenges involved while protecting the human rights of migrants, regardless of status. They should also recognize the contributions made by migrants to the socioeconomic development of the receiving communities and to the creation of global wealth.

76. The Government was working with national and regional stakeholders to address the root causes of migration and to ensure that it remained an option, not an obligation, with special attention paid to the generation of economic, social, cultural and educational opportunities and the realization of human rights for all Salvadorans. The creation of qualification programmes to help people from countries of origin meet the standards established by receiving countries was one means of opening channels for regular migratory flows, preserving family ties and avoiding irregular migratory methods that endangered lives.

77. No State could successfully manage migration on its own. The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration established a framework for regional and international cooperation among both State and non-State actors in countries of origin and transit and destination countries, on the basis of respect for the human rights of all people, regardless of migration status. Although many challenges remained, El Salvador was committed to ensuring that the multilateral discussions conducted within the United Nations were

translated into concrete action to benefit migrants throughout the world.

78. **Ms. Alzouman** (Kuwait) said that international, regional and national cooperation was essential to creating fully consensual mechanisms that safeguarded the enjoyment of fundamental rights by all while respecting the religious and cultural backgrounds and values of all States, as well as their independence. The three interrelated, complementary and indivisible pillars of the United Nations would help to reduce grievances and achieve global peace and security, leading to inclusive and sustainable development that would, in turn, act as a shield against conflict and human rights violations.

79. The joint and tireless efforts of the international community and relevant United Nations partners were required to address global challenges relating to plurality and gender inequality, improve the global human rights situation and promote consensus on the principles contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. At the national level, the Constitution and national legislation of Kuwait were in line with mainstream international human rights instruments aimed at protecting and promoting human dignity, equal rights, freedom and peace and security around the world. Given the important role of foreigners and expatriates in Kuwait, the Government spared no effort in taking all legislative and executive measures necessary to promote and protect the rights of all persons living on Kuwaiti soil. Having endorsed 19 conventions on fundamental labour rights, Kuwait was open to attracting foreign labour, which in turn contributed to raising the standard of living in countries of origin.

80. Kuwait had established a national bureau to coordinate and consolidate all human rights efforts and contributed to the implementation of human rights instruments and United Nations conventions through its participation in international events, its recent non-permanent membership in the Security Council and its voluntary contributions to United Nations agencies and mechanisms. Despite growing interest in human rights and in leaving no one behind, armed conflict, terrorism and political and economic instability had aggravated the violations suffered by many innocent people around the world. Kuwait remained committed to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as to laying the foundations for security and stability around the world, through international cooperation, for the well-being of all humanity.

81. **Ms. Manuel** (Angola) said that multilateralism was a relevant and important means of promoting

international cooperation and strengthening partnerships between States and, when respectful of the legitimacy of each State, of promoting well-being and equality for all through the realization of human rights. Varied geographical representation on the Human Rights Council contributed to the improvement of national human rights institutions in all States. In addition to external challenges to the full realization of human rights, the inconsistency in relative importance granted to the three pillars of the United Nations reflected the need to strengthen their interdependence and correct the underfunding of the human rights pillar, without which there could be no peace and security and, in turn, no development. The upcoming review of the Human Rights Council provided an opportunity for Member States to indicate how those challenges should be addressed.

82. Recent improvements in the human rights situation in Angola reflected the Government's conviction that guaranteeing individual and collective rights and freedoms and ensuring access to public services improved the well-being and happiness of its citizens. Considering human rights to be a priority and a matter of national security, the Government had recently adopted a national human rights strategy that promoted public and private human rights education and strengthened dialogue with civil society in order to increase active participation in partnership with the State. Major changes to the judicial framework had also been made, in particular following the recent ratification of several conventions and other international instruments. Angola reaffirmed its commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights, through continuous improvements to national strategies, policies and structures and through its membership in the Human Rights Council.

83. **Mr. Teeramungcalanon** (Thailand) said that the promotion and protection of human rights was a fundamental part of his Government's continued efforts to ensure national stability and sustainable growth and were reinforced and complemented by the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The values of equal rights and non-discrimination were enshrined in the nation's legislative and regulatory framework, which had been revised to ensure that no one was left behind. Under the Government's most recent human rights plan, vulnerable target groups would be expanded to include human rights defenders and journalists. National human rights committees continued to meet and perform their functions.

84. Endeavours in Thailand to safeguard human rights had always been aimed at building a fair, rules-based

and inclusive society and at reaching those furthest behind first, including detainees. Thailand looked forward to the panel discussion on strengthening mechanisms to protect the rights of prisoners, to be held at the forty-fourth session of the Human Rights Council. Having established universal health care in 2002, Thailand continued to improve its coverage and delivery, while ensuring its sustainability. As part of its efforts to ensure a holistic, rights-based and people-centred approach to socioeconomic development, Thailand was the first country in Asia to have drafted a national action plan on business and human rights and to have ratified the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188), of the International Labour Organization. It had hosted the Responsible Business and Human Rights Forum in June 2019 and remained open to further multi-stakeholder cooperation, through a balanced approach to security, development and human rights in promoting opportunities and addressing challenges related to migration.

85. Reaffirming its full support for OHCHR and highlighting its engagement with the Human Rights Council, Thailand would continue to strengthen global partnerships, technical cooperation and capacity-building to translate international human rights obligations and standards into action and reality. In implementing the 2030 Agenda, people must be at the centre of development actions and policies, in line with the fundamental principle that all human beings were born free and equal in dignity and rights.

86. **Mr. Herasymenko** (Ukraine) said that the Human Rights Council mechanisms and special procedure mandate holders needed to strengthen their global responsibilities with regard to the vital role that they played in preventing the occurrence or escalation of violations, including through monitoring human rights issues and situations and offering legal or practical advice to Governments concerned. The legislative steps taken by his Government to improve protections for missing or disappeared persons included a compensation mechanism for individuals who had disappeared while carrying out military duties and legal status and social guarantees for persons illegally detained, imprisoned or taken hostage in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine and beyond by illegal armed groups or law enforcement agencies of a foreign State. Recalling that no one had yet been brought to justice in the cases identified as enforced disappearances in Crimea, his delegation regretted the lack of a mechanism to clarify the whereabouts of missing persons, still blocked by Russia, while international humanitarian organizations were deprived of full and unhindered access to the temporarily

occupied areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. Despite ongoing external military aggression that had led to the temporary occupation of Crimea and parts of Donbass, Ukraine remained committed to implementing a comprehensive reform agenda, aimed at strengthening judiciary independence, curbing corruption and consolidating democracy. Ukrainian civil society had had an active role in designing and exercising effective oversight in that regard and would continue to be a key player in those efforts.

87. **Mr. Poveda Brito** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that the promotion and protection of all human rights was an ethical, political and constitutional commitment for his country, as reflected in national policies aimed at increasing civil participation, the visibility of vulnerable people and the eradication of poverty. The election of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the Human Rights Council was evidence that the international community had rejected the interventionist and unprecedented campaign of unilateral coercive measures aimed at destabilizing and discrediting the country. Human Rights Council resolution 42/4, in which the Council welcomed the permanent presence of OHCHR in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, clearly reflected his Government's willingness to maintain a constructive and respectful relationship with that United Nations entity.

88. A June 2019 visit by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, conducted with no preconditions, had been followed by the publication of a previously drafted report presenting a biased view that did not reflect his Government's openness to dialogue or the facts on the ground. The document contained significant flaws in methodology, relied heavily on sources lacking in objectivity and omitted almost all the information provided by the State and other actors. The Government's observations should be taken into consideration and those errors corrected.

89. The use of non-consensual unilateral coercive measures and multidimensional attacks on the economic and political stability of a country gravely affected the human rights of all its people and was the worst way to advance respectful coexistence. In spite of considerable international pressure, his Government continued to meet all of its human rights obligations and requested that the economic and financial blockade against the country be lifted. States should rely on dialogue, not interference, to achieve peace. They should also refrain from using human rights for political gain and from stoking xenophobia and intolerance as an excuse to avoid facing up to their own transgressions. His delegation reaffirmed its unshakable commitment to

building a world of peace, free of violence and armed conflict, where all could live together in harmony, regardless of cultural, national, linguistic, religious and political differences, in line with international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

90. **Ms. Henry** (Jamaica) said that, having ratified seven of the nine core human rights treaties, her country was committed to ensuring that all persons within its borders were empowered to realize their full potential. The Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms was a legal and policy framework aimed at guaranteeing universal respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms, in compliance with international human rights instruments and other obligations. It also included provision for redress through the Supreme Court.

91. To support the foundational legal order established by the Constitution, a national development plan had been established, in line with the 2030 Agenda, focused on the creation of a secure, cohesive and just society based on tolerance and respect for human rights and freedoms. Jamaica had also established an interministerial committee on human rights to better coordinate information-sharing across different government bodies, with a view to ensuring that its reporting process on the review and assessment of treaty compliance remained fit for purpose. Recent initiatives to guarantee protections for the most vulnerable members of society included the adoption, amendment or development of legislation to safeguard all persons from sexual harassment; protect children in conflict with the law; increase sentences for persons engaged in the trafficking of children; and support persons with disabilities.

92. Because the implementation of human rights instruments was a holistic process that included promoting awareness of the full scope of rights and under what circumstances they could be limited, Jamaica would continue to strengthen citizen participation, increase public education campaigns, foster equity in all sectors of society and strengthen accountability and transparency mechanisms. Her delegation called upon States to hold true to the principles espoused in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to ensure, through dialogue and partnership, that people remained at the centre of global solutions to human rights issues.

93. **Ms. Pierre Fabre** (Haiti) said that her Government had enshrined all of the rights covered by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in its Constitution and it continued to work towards their promotion, protection and

consolidation. Acknowledging the need for international support in that regard, the Government received advice and assistance from the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti, including with regard to fair, transparent and inclusive elections, the rule of law and political stability. Haiti guaranteed respect for freedom of expression, as a means for Haitians to demand improvements to their quality of life, and protected economic, social and cultural rights through the creation of jobs and social programmes, as a means to reduce extreme poverty. In the face of high unemployment and social unrest, her Government was determined to make every effort to improve the living conditions of its people, in particular for the most vulnerable.

94. **Mr. Grba** (Serbia) said that, as a multi-ethnic country, Serbia attached special attention to the rights of national minorities. Accordingly, measures had been further strengthened to enhance minority representation in State bodies and ensure access by members of minority groups to education in their mother tongues, with the expectation that Serbian minorities in neighbouring countries would receive similar protections, especially with regard to the use of Serbian languages and the Cyrillic script.

95. Although Serbia had made significant progress in the implementation of standards, laws, strategies, action plans and international conventions on the protection and promotion of human rights, room for improvement remained. Cooperation with OHCHR and other United Nations bodies was therefore greatly valued, as reflected by the establishment of a dedicated council to monitor the implementation of recommendations issued by United Nations human rights mechanisms. Council members included representatives of government departments, Parliament, independent human rights institutions and civil society organizations, and its work had led to the adoption of an implementation plan linked to the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals.

96. After two decades, respect for the human rights of non-Albanians in Kosovo and Metohija remained unsatisfactory, and the conditions necessary for their sustainable return had not been established. Serbian communities continued to be the target of ethnically-motivated attacks and hate crimes in 2019, including physical attacks and injury, the arrest of returnees on trumped-up charges, the mistreatment of clergy, break-ins, verbal harassment and damage to property and the desecration of graveyards. Violations of basic rights and freedoms of non-Albanians in the south of Kosovo and Metohija were of particular concern, in particular with regard to the ongoing theft of the property of internally displaced persons. There was great concern over the rule

of law in Kosovo and Metohija, including with regard to judiciary independence, due process and a lack of protection for victims and witnesses, with a catalytic impact on corruption and organized crime. Belgrade had initiated and continued to pursue dialogue with Pristina and remained committed to a peaceful, sustainable and mutually acceptable solution.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.