



# Security Council

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## **Note verbale dated 1 July 2020 from the Permanent Missions of Belgium, Estonia, France and Germany to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

The Permanent Missions of Belgium, Estonia, France and Germany to the United Nations have the honour to transmit herewith a letter from the Chair of the Coordination Committee of Special Procedures (see annex).

The Permanent Missions of Belgium, Estonia, France and Germany to the United Nations kindly request that the present note verbale and its annex be issued as a document of the Security Council.



## **Annex to the note verbale dated 1 July 2020 from the Permanent Missions of Belgium, Estonia, France and Germany to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

12 June 2020

I am writing in my capacity as Chair of the Coordination Committee of Special Procedures to share information about the work of special procedures mandate holders that may be pertinent to the work of the Security Council.

Special procedures have consistently played an important role in prevention and early warning, sounding the alarm on emerging crises, be they thematic or country related. Their contribution occurs throughout the conflict/crisis continuum, before, during and after conflict, inter alia by identifying early signs of crisis, addressing human rights violations as conflicts unfold or fostering the integration of human rights in post-conflict situations, as well as supporting inclusive development.

In his call to action for human rights, the Secretary-General stresses the well-documented correlation between a society's enjoyment of and commitment to human rights and its resilience to crisis as well as the shared responsibility of all United Nations actors to prevention. The purpose of the present letter is therefore to raise attention and facilitate access to the information gathered by special procedures, making the human rights system responsive and innovative in confronting human rights challenges, and enhancing synergies between human rights and all pillars of the work of the United Nations.

Information about the activities undertaken by special procedures in 2019 is contained in the annual report of special procedures and its addendum on facts and figures ([A/HRC/43/64](#), [A/HRC/43/64/Add.1](#) and [A/HRC/43/64/Add.1/Corr.1](#)). The report provides a comprehensive overview of activities undertaken and their impact. More importantly, the document also highlights the contribution of special procedures to prevention, peace and security as well as their engagement with other United Nations bodies and entities. The recommendations and conclusions issued by mandate holders on thematic and country issues in 2019 are also compiled (see [A/HRC/43/65](#)).

The visits of mandate holders to countries in post-conflict, conflict or crisis situations are good examples in that context, and a number of visits undertaken by special procedures in 2019 are relevant. These include, for example, Bosnia and Herzegovina (migrants), the Central African Republic (Central African Republic country mandate), Ethiopia (freedom of expression), Mali (Mali country mandate), Nigeria (housing and summary executions), Somalia (Somalia country mandate), Timor-Leste (indigenous peoples), Ukraine (sexual orientation and gender identity) and Bangladesh, Malaysia and Thailand, in the context of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar. In addition, several reports of visits undertaken in 2018 were presented last year, such as those regarding Chad (mercenaries), Nigeria (trafficking) and Ukraine (foreign debt, torture and enforced disappearances).

Similarly, thematic reports address topics that relate to prevention, early warning, conflict or emerging crises. The report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education focused on the right to education and the prevention of atrocity crimes and mass or grave human rights violations (see [A/74/243](#)). The Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence examined practical experiences of domestic reparation programmes (see [A/HRC/42/45](#)) and addressed the question of apologies for gross human rights violations and serious violations of international humanitarian law (see [A/74/147](#)).

Special procedures have increased their engagement with United Nations bodies and representatives. The Coordination Committee has invested efforts in promoting special procedures throughout the United Nations, and these efforts have proved successful, as demonstrated by the engagement of some mandate holders with the Security Council, the peacebuilding architecture, the Sustainable Development Goals architecture and, more generally, United Nations country teams. Efforts have also been made to collect good stories on the positive impact of the work of mandate holders, including on the peace, security and development areas. This information is available on the website of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.<sup>1</sup>

As we have all been gripped by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and addressing this unprecedented crisis, please know that mandate holders have risen to the challenge. They have taken various initiatives demonstrating how integral human rights are to the protection of people during this crisis and the need to work jointly to develop effective responses. They have issued advice to States and other stakeholders, creating innovative tools and continuing their preventive and monitoring work. The result is a series of documents, issued through a variety of means, which cover a broad range of human rights issues, several of them related to peace and security issues such as the situation of internally displaced persons, incitement to hatred and violence, transitional justice and countries in conflict. The collective voice and actions of the special procedures system on this issue, including a working document entitled “United Nations special procedures and COVID-19”, an information note and a one-page infographic showing all special procedures actions at a glance, have been compiled in a dedicated web page.<sup>2</sup>

In the light of the Secretary-General’s vision that human rights should be transformative and provide solutions, I trust that the work and recommendations of special procedures as illustrated in the present letter would give the United Nations, including the Security Council, useful tools to understand, prevent and respond to crisis and prevent their reoccurrence. My colleagues and I would be pleased to continue engaging further with the members of the Security Council in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and our own mandates.

*(Signed)* Anita **Ramasastry**  
Chair of the Coordination Committee of Special Procedures

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<sup>1</sup> [www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/SP/Pages/SPGoodStories.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/SP/Pages/SPGoodStories.aspx).

<sup>2</sup> [www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/SP/Pages/COVID-19-and-Special-Procedures.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/SP/Pages/COVID-19-and-Special-Procedures.aspx).