



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
3 September 2019

English only

---

## Human Rights Council

Forty-second session

9–27 September 2019

Agenda item 5

Human rights bodies and mechanisms

### **Written statement\* submitted by Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights Association, a non- governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[22 August 2019]

---

\* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.

GE.19-15056(E)



\* 1 9 1 5 0 5 6 \*

Please recycle The recycling symbol, consisting of three chasing arrows forming a triangle.



## Acts of intimidation against cooperators with UN Human Rights Mechanisms

### Introduction

Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights (Egypt) expresses its deep concern about the spread of reprisals and intimidation of some States, including Council members, against those who cooperate with Special Procedures mandate holders and experts and members of UN Investigative Mechanisms and Committees, as well as repeated threats against UN Special Procedures system as a whole.

In recent years, acts of revenge and intimidation have increased both in number and severity. Individuals or groups face intimidation and reprisals by governments for cooperating with UN mechanisms through submitting information or filing individual complaints or engaging in dialogue with them. These actions take various forms such as travel ban, threats and harassment, including those by officials, defamation, surveillance campaigns, developing restrictive legislation, physical assault, arbitrary arrest and detention, torture and ill-treatment, including sexual violence and denial of access to medical care.

### Reprisals against those who cooperate with UN Mechanisms

The Special Procedures are the eyes and ears of the Council and a safety valve for the work of this Council closely related to the reality of human rights on the ground. These reprisals aim to discredit, intimidate, deter and silence those experts in order to prevent civil society or anyone from cooperating with them. Recently, there have been a number of reprisals against Special Procedures; the Government of the Philippines has, on several occasions, threatened to use physical violence against the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial killings and charged the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples with terrorism. Burundi and Eritrea carry out such reprisals also against the Special Rapporteur on Eritrea, or members of the Commissions of Inquiry on Burundi and Eritrea on several occasions, some within the Council, in the General Assembly and in the media.

Many of those who cooperate with Special Procedures mandate holders, experts and members of UN Investigative Mechanisms and Commissions are also subjected to reprisals and intimidation. In Myanmar, security forces continue to threaten Rohingya villagers with retaliation if they speak to any of the international human rights mechanism. This a continuation of their threat in 2018 to not speak to members of the Security Council delegation to the country.<sup>1</sup> Reprisals by the armed forces against civilians following the visit of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar to Rakhine State in early 2017 have not been actually investigated yet, also there are allegations of continued arrests and arbitrary detention.<sup>2</sup> The Special Rapporteur on Myanmar also faces reprisals and violent threats on social media.

In Turkey, the detention of Kürsat Çevik, who was detained following the coup attempt on July 15, 2016, is continued. He was classified as an opponent of the ruling AKP several months before the coup, like most of his colleagues detained with him in Mardin and elsewhere in Turkey. He was also intimidated and discriminated against.<sup>3</sup>

In July 2017, the pro-government media distorted the opinion of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention about the Çevik's case. It was reported that he had been subjected to reprisals in and outside the place of detention. There are no known reasons for his

<sup>1</sup> Security Council, "S/PV.8255", 8255th meeting, Monday, 14 May 2018, New York, available at: <https://bit.ly/2Z2PjiP>

<sup>2</sup> () "خبيرة أممية تحذر من الأعمال الانتقامية خلال زيارتها لميانمار"، موقع أخبار الأمم المتحدة، 24 يناير 2017، وللمزيد من: <https://bit.ly/2Z2uUKz> التفاصيل على الرابط التالي:

<sup>3</sup> "UN Body Asks Immediate Release Of Arbitrarily Jailed Police Chief", Hizmet Movement News, July 2, 2017, available at: <https://bit.ly/2N1ICLh>

continued detention. His lawyer has appealed against his detention, but to no avail so far. Çevik's lawyer is also said to be accused of being a Gülen follower.<sup>4</sup>

South Sudan has seen a continuation of reprisals, intimidation and harassment by government forces through arbitrary arrests and detentions against human rights defenders and collaborators with the UN. Some individuals have been ordered explicitly by South Sudanese security officials to stop sharing information with the UN.

In addition, UNMISS has received credible reports of intimidation against three South Sudanese human rights defenders living in neighboring countries or traveling abroad who were accused of collaborating with the UN and criticizing human rights in South Sudan. Human rights defenders are reportedly threatened by government representatives after meetings with UN staff in Upper Nile and Equatoria.<sup>5</sup>

An Israeli court on April 16, 2019 upheld Israel's order to deport Omar Shakir, the Human Rights Watch Israel and Palestine director, after losing his recent appeal. He is accused of promoting campaigns to boycott Israel in support of the Palestinians. Omar Shakir challenged the decision to withdraw his work permit in 2018.<sup>6</sup> Israel says that Shakir, a US citizen, supports a movement calling for a boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel. Israel criminalized the movement and called on Western powers to follow suit. Israel relied on Omar Shakir's participation in a UN database of businesses operating in Israeli settlements, in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 13/36.<sup>7</sup>

The deportation ruling comes amid sustained efforts to muzzle criticism of Israel's human rights record. The Interior Ministry has denied entry to a number of other international rights advocates, accused Israeli advocacy groups of "slander" and of discrediting the state or army, imposed extensive financial reporting requirements on Israeli rights groups that burden their advocacy, and subjected Palestinian rights defenders to travel restrictions and even arrest and criminal charges.<sup>8</sup>

Finally, Maat calls upon all states to join hands and end such reprisals against Special Procedures and those who cooperate with them. The President of the Council and the Member States should respond promptly during their meetings to such reprisals. The Council should protect its Special Procedures from all efforts to undermine them, whether by such reprisals or other dangerous acts.

## Recommendations

Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights recommends to:

- Investigate the continuation of reprisals against Rohingya villagers who cooperated with the Security Council delegation to the country in 2018.
- Pressure the Government of Turkey for the immediate release of Kürsat Çevik, as well as stop distorting him in media.
- Pressure the Government of South Sudan to stop incidents, reprisals, arbitrary arrests and detentions, restrictions on movements, intimidation and harassment, especially those following meetings with UN staff in Upper Nile and Equatoria, in September and November 2017.
- Condemn Israel for its actions against Omar Shakir, the Human Rights Watch Israel and Palestine director, and pressure Israel to stop any harassment, deportations, or

<sup>4</sup> SCF, "UN body gives law lesson to Turkey and asks immediate release of arbitrarily jailed police chief", Stockholm Center for freedom, July 2, 2017, available at: <https://bit.ly/2H4FxpY>

<sup>5</sup> Human Rights Council, A/HRC/39/41, Thirty-ninth session, 10–28 September 2018. Available at: <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/39/41>

<sup>6</sup> () "إسرائيل تعيد تفعيل ترحيل مسؤول في "هيومن رايتس ووتش"، منشور على موقع هيومان رايتس ووتش، بتاريخ أبريل 16، 2019 <https://bit.ly/2ZhXqsY>، وللمزيد من التفاصيل على الرابط التالي:

<sup>7</sup> () أشرف راضي، "محكمة إسرائيلية تؤيد قرار ترحيل مسؤول بمنظمة هيومن رايتس ووتش"، رويترز، 17 أبريل 2019، وللمزيد من التفاصيل على الرابط التالي: <https://bit.ly/2KM2wHL>

<sup>8</sup> () هيومان رايتس ووتش، مرجع سابق.

reprisals against anyone who participates in the UN database of businesses operating in Israeli settlements.

---