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## Third Committee

### Summary record of the 53rd meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 16 November 2022, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Blanco Conde ..... (Dominican Republic)

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*The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.*

**Agenda item 68: Promotion and protection of human rights** (*continued*)

**(c) Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives** (*continued*)  
(A/C.3/77/L.35 and A/C.3/77/L.36/Rev.1)

*Draft resolution A/C.3/77/L.35: Situation of human rights in the temporarily occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine*

1. **Ms. Al-thani** (Qatar) said that her delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution on the basis of its consistent principled position concerning the crisis in Ukraine. It had voted in favour of all resolutions relating to Ukraine that were mentioned in the draft text, since they were underpinned by the Charter of the United Nations and the principles and provisions of international humanitarian and human rights law. All parties to the conflict in Ukraine must show restraint and avoid any military escalation with immediate and definitive effect, given the serious consequences of military action and the impact that it had on the human rights of defenceless civilians. Her delegation's position had remained unchanged since February 2022 and was based on the Charter, in particular Article 2, and on relevant General Assembly resolutions, in which the Assembly called for respect for the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

2. **Mr. Islamuly** (Kazakhstan) said that the situation in Ukraine was particularly sensitive and painful for Kazakhstan. His delegation called for the immediate cessation of hostilities and the reestablishment of diplomatic process in order to achieve a peaceful solution, in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations. The draft resolution was not conducive to dialogue or to resolving the crisis. In fact, it further aggravated the situation. Kazakhstan was not opposed to its substance; rather, it opposed politicization of the issue of human rights in general, selectivity in assessing human rights situations and the use of human rights as an instrument to exert pressure on Member States for political purposes. He called on all Member States to engage constructively on the issue of human rights protection, instead of taking confrontational, counterproductive and coercive approaches. Human rights must be protected through equal dialogue, in a spirit of mutual respect and cooperation. The universal periodic review, the treaty bodies and the special procedures of the Human Rights Council were the most suitable mechanisms for objectively and reliably assessing the human rights

situation in every country. The draft resolution fell outside the competence of the Third Committee, since it referred to matters of territorial integrity, annexation and occupation. In view of the foregoing, Kazakhstan had voted against the draft resolution.

3. **Ms. Rajandran** (Singapore) said that her delegation had taken a principled position of abstaining from the voting in the case of country-specific human rights resolutions in the Third Committee, since such resolutions had become highly selective and were driven by political considerations. However, its vote should not be interpreted as reflecting its position on the substance of the issues raised in the draft resolution, or as derogating in any way from its clear, consistent and principled position against the invasion of Ukraine by Russia and the latter's violations of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Singapore had supported the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its eleventh emergency special session regarding the invasion of Ukraine by Russia and the latter's decision to annex occupied regions of Ukraine. Singapore maintained a longstanding position that the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all countries, big or small, must be respected.

4. **Mr. Altarsha** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation had voted against the draft resolution, which constituted a political tool and an attempt to attack the Russian Federation. Targeting a specific country was always counterproductive. It was an exploitation of human rights for political purposes, and thus a violation of the principles of universality, non-selectivity and objectivity. The draft resolution was a waste of valuable resources, which could have been more effectively used to implement projects that would serve all of humanity. The human rights situation in each country must be examined within the framework of the universal periodic review, which had been expressly created for the purpose of improving the human rights situation on the ground in all Member States on a non-selective basis. Engaging in unnecessary competition with Geneva was a waste of time and undermined the action being taken on human rights within the Human Rights Council. In addition, adding contrived issues to the agenda was weighing down the United Nations and hindering its ability to fulfil its responsibility to maintain international peace and security.

5. **Ms. Xu Daizhu** (China) said that the Committee's work in the field of human rights should be based on equality and mutual respect, and differences should be addressed through constructive dialogue and cooperation. Her country opposed politicization, double standards and the provocation of confrontation. It also

opposed the establishment of country-specific mechanisms without the consent of the country concerned. Her delegation had voted against the draft resolution, in view of its consistent position concerning country-specific human rights resolutions.

*Draft resolution A/C.3/77/L.36/Rev.1: Situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic*

6. **The Chair** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

7. **Ms. Carty** (United States of America), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the main sponsors, said that some at the United Nations in New York would like to pretend that the conflict was over. However, that could not be further from the truth. Syrians continued to endure trauma, including as a result of the extrajudicial killings, torture, disappearances and unjust detention carried out by the Syrian regime. They also continued to face pervasive sexual and gender-based violence. The text contained strengthened language on women and girls, including on the disproportionate impact of the conflict on them and on the importance of their full, equal, and meaningful participation in decision-making and leadership.

8. The main sponsors supported the recommendation made in the report of the Secretary-General on missing people in the Syrian Arab Republic (A/76/890) that measures to address the missing must be coherent, inclusive and centred around victims and family members.

9. Through the draft resolution, Syria would be rightfully maintained on the agenda of the General Assembly. The text contained a call for continued attention to the critical issue of detainees and missing persons early in 2023 and a call for the Security Council to reauthorize the cross-border humanitarian mechanism in January 2023 for at least 12 months. She urged all delegations to support the draft resolution, in order to take a stand against the brutal atrocities in Syria and to remind the world of the persistence of the Syrian conflict.

10. **Mr. Mahmassani** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the following delegations had become sponsors of the draft resolution: Andorra, Cyprus, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, Japan, Kuwait, Liberia, Lithuania, Marshall Islands, Montenegro, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, San Marino, Switzerland and Ukraine.

11. **The Chair** said that a recorded vote had been requested on the draft resolution by the Syrian Arab Republic.

12. **Mr. Johnson** (United Kingdom), making a general statement before the voting, said that his Government remained deeply concerned by the situation in Syria over the previous 12 months. The Syrian regime continued to commit crimes against humanity, war crimes and human rights violations against the Syrian people. Tens of thousands of Syrians had been forcibly disappeared and detained during the conflict. Thousands of families were waiting to hear about loved ones; efforts must be intensified to provide answers and accountability.

13. The humanitarian situation had worsened dramatically since cross-border access had been reduced. An estimated 14.6 million people needed humanitarian assistance and approximately 12 million people faced acute food insecurity. Life-saving cross-border access must continue.

14. The Third Committee had a remit to examine human rights issues that affected people all over the world. Country-specific resolutions were introduced only for the most serious or prevalent violators. The Syrian people must not be forgotten and must not be left to resolve the crisis alone. By adopting the draft resolution, the international community could hold the Syrian regime to account and ensure that it complied with its international legal and human rights obligations.

15. **Ms. Tudor-bezies** (Canada), making a general statement before the voting, said that the draft resolution was an annual reminder to the Syrian regime and its supporters that the world was watching and condemned the gross violations of international humanitarian and human rights law in Syria. It was also a means of demonstrating solidarity with the Syrian people.

16. Humanitarian needs in Syria were at their highest levels since 2011. Her delegation called on parties to the conflict to ensure safe, full, immediate, rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access to those in need. Canada stood with the women and girls of Syria and called for women leaders and women's rights organizations to play a full, meaningful and equal role in building a more peaceful future for all. The perpetrators of sexual and gender-based crimes must be prosecuted.

17. Canada welcomed the reference to the report of the Secretary-General on missing people in the Syrian Arab Republic (A/76/890) and the efforts of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011 to assist in the search for missing persons. Canada was gravely concerned about all missing persons,

including those subject to abduction, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and torture. In line with Security Council resolution 2474 (2019), Canada urged all parties to armed conflict to take all measures to account for persons reported missing.

18. Her delegation wished to reaffirm its steadfast commitment to the Syrian people. It would remain focused on addressing the critical humanitarian needs of all Syrians and would continue to demand that all parties put an immediate end to all violations of international humanitarian and human rights law and human rights abuses.

*Statements made in explanation of vote before the voting*

19. **Mr. Khani Jooyabad** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the submission of the draft resolution by the United States of America and certain other countries showed that they continued to use United Nations human rights mechanisms to serve their political interests. Billions of dollars had been spent on funding and arming terrorists to destabilize the legitimate Government in Syria and the country's oil reserves had been looted by the United States. The main sponsor was sending the message that it was addicted to oil and prepared to abuse human rights for political leverage. The draft resolution touched on issues that went well beyond the Committee's mandate. The biased and politically motivated text turned a blind eye to all activities and achievements of the Government of Syria in bringing about stability, peace and civilian protection, in providing humanitarian assistance and in facilitating the safe return of internally displaced persons and refugees. It did not reflect that Government's cooperation with the United Nations, its tireless efforts to combat terrorism and unilateral coercive measures or its resistance to the frequent and routine air raids and aggression of the Zionist expansionist regime. The negative impact of those atrocities on human rights in Syria was also not reflected. To preserve the credibility of the Committee, his delegation would vote against the biased draft resolution.

20. **Mr. Poveda Brito** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that his country maintained the principled position of rejecting selectivity and politicization in the consideration of human rights issues and the establishment of country-specific mechanisms, reports or resolutions without the consent of the countries concerned. Efforts should be made to build on the progress achieved since the creation of the Human Rights Council, whose credibility was undermined by such special procedures. Human rights issues should be examined within the framework of the universal

periodic review and by the treaty bodies on the basis of cooperation and dialogue with the countries concerned.

21. The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, of which Venezuela was a member, rejected country-specific mandates, since they caused confrontation and did not contribute to constructive dialogue with States, thereby running counter to the spirit of the United Nations. Politically motivated reports, mechanisms and resolutions that targeted specific countries violated the principles of impartiality, objectivity, transparency, non-selectivity, non-politicization, non-confrontation, equality and mutual respect, and ran counter to the principles of political independence, respect for national sovereignty, non-interference in the internal affairs of States and the self-determination of peoples, all of which were enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

22. **Ms. Xu Daizhu** (China) said that differences in the field of human rights should be addressed through constructive dialogue and cooperation. China was opposed to the politicization of human rights issues aimed at interfering in the internal affairs of States and to the establishment of country-specific human rights mechanisms without the consent of the country concerned.

23. Over 10 years into the crisis, the Syrian people were still mired in poverty and the turmoil of war, for which the United States and other Western countries unquestionably bore responsibility. Frequent military interventions by the United States in Syria had resulted in mass civilian casualties and displacement. Unilateral coercive measures indiscriminately imposed by the United States had deprived the civilian population of basic necessities.

24. United States forces were still controlling oil and gas resources in Syria, usurping its major oil producing areas and plundering over 80 per cent of its oil production. They were also smuggling and burning the country's food stocks and committing serious violations of basic human rights, such as the right to food, health and development. External interference, the provocation of confrontation and the imposition of sanctions only added to the suffering of the Syrian people. The only realistic way out of the crisis was to seek a political solution while maintaining and respecting the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Syria. Member States should put an end to interference in internal affairs on the pretext of human rights and should not brush aside the serious harm caused to the human rights of Syrian people by illegal military intervention and unilateral coercive measures. In light of the foregoing, her delegation would vote against the draft resolution.

25. **Mr. González Behmaras** (Cuba) said that his delegation would vote against the draft resolution, which was clearly politically motivated, given that the main sponsor was the United States, a country that was responsible for some of the worst, and well documented, human rights violations. It was both worrying and unacceptable that such resolutions were applied only against developing countries that were also subject to coercive unilateral measures. The draft fostered a punitive and condemnatory approach that did not take into account the interests of the country concerned and failed to promote a coordination of efforts, which was essential to addressing human rights challenges. A political solution to the conflict, taking into account the interests and aspirations of the Syrian people, could not be achieved through resolutions that undermined the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity. A peaceful and negotiated solution should be found, and the Committee should foster cooperation and dialogue with full respect for the sovereignty of the country and abolish such selective and politically motivated practices.

26. **Mr. Kim Nam Hyok** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, said that his country rejected country-specific resolutions, which politicized human rights through selectivity and double standards and were aimed at exerting pressure and imposing political interests on other countries. Politicization, selectivity and double standards in the consideration of human rights issues bore no relevance to the genuine promotion and protection of human rights. His delegation firmly opposed all politicized attempts to infringe upon national sovereignty and to interfere in the internal affairs of other sovereign States under the pretext of human rights. All human rights issues must be discussed and resolved in an atmosphere of constructive dialogue and cooperation, on the basis of the principled position of respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, peace and stability. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea supported the continuous efforts of the Syrian Arab Republic to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity and to fight against all attempts at foreign occupation and military intervention. His delegation would therefore vote against the draft resolution.

27. **Mr. Kuzmin** (Russian Federation), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, said that the draft resolution was a clear example of politicization and double standards. Its content was far removed from reality: the entire text was based on unsubstantiated allegations, lies and conjecture, brazenly used by opponents of the Syrian Government. It contained baseless slander regarding the legitimate Government of

Syria, which was supported by the people and which faced blockades and harsh unilateral sanctions as it continued to combat terrorism and foreign occupation. Amid the severe humanitarian crisis, the Government had been doing everything possible to restore a peaceful life in liberated territories, to return refugees and to ensure the country's economic recovery. The draft resolution was a cynical document; its main sponsor, the United States, apparently had a burning concern for Syrians, yet that same country had deployed troops thousands of kilometres from its borders and had carried out aggression against Syria, under the cover of Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. The United States continued to occupy part of a sovereign State; was looting natural and agricultural resources in occupied territories belonging to the Syrian people; had imposed stifling sanctions against Syrians living in areas it had failed to occupy; and controlled the territories of the Hawl and Rukban camps, where women and children continued to live in appalling, inhumane conditions. His delegation urged Member States not to go along with the aggressor State and to vote against the draft resolution it had introduced, as his own delegation would do.

28. **Mr. Alateek** (Saudi Arabia) said that, 11 years after the start of the Syrian crisis, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) continued to tally the civilian victims of the conflict, who numbered in the hundreds of thousands, in addition to the tens of thousands who were missing. The serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law continued. His delegation would vote in favour of the draft resolution, given that a political solution was the only way to put an end to the Syrian crisis and the suffering of the Syrian people, pursuant to Security Council resolution [2254 \(2015\)](#) and the process that had been launched at the June 2012 meeting of the Action Group for Syria. His delegation wished to reaffirm its support for all United Nations efforts to bring the conflict in Syria to a peaceful end. It hoped that the current draft resolution and other United Nations actions would help the Syrian people to achieve their legitimate aspirations towards peace and stability.

29. **Mr. Altarsha** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that it was strange and ironic that the draft resolution had been submitted by the delegation of the United States, whose Government was involved in hostile activities against various countries, including the Syrian Arab Republic, and had flagrantly violated the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law and international humanitarian law through its occupation of Syrian territory, bombardment of civilians and the complete destruction of infrastructure in the city



of Raqqa. Moreover, the United States continued to deprive the Syrian people of access to the most basic necessities as a result of the economic sanctions that it had imposed. He questioned whether such a country should be submitting a draft resolution on the situation of human rights in any country.

30. The current text had been drafted behind closed doors and delegations had been able to access the draft on the e-deleGATE portal only a few days prior to its submission. Such a course of action was neither professional nor transparent. The authors continued to put their hostile political agenda above any humanitarian considerations by levelling unsubstantiated allegations against his country and exploiting United Nations entities and organizations responsible for promoting and protecting human rights. As in years past, the draft resolution manipulated United Nations human rights mechanisms, and promoted concepts that had not been agreed upon and mechanisms that had been established as a result of pressure and coercion and in violation of the provisions of the Charter and the principles of international law. It also encroached on the jurisdiction of other committees and other bodies, and went far beyond the mandate and technical competencies of the Third Committee. The draft resolution was a deeply politicized text that was entirely divorced from reality, sought to undermine his country's recent achievements with regard to restoring peace and stability, and ignored his Government's efforts to counter terrorism, meet the humanitarian needs of the Syrian people, facilitate the return of refugees and internally displaced persons and achieve national reconciliation. The text also distorted the fact that the Syrian Arab Republic was committed to engaging with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and disregarded the effects of the inhumane and illegal blockade imposed by the submitter on the Syrian people, which prevented State institutions from meeting the people's needs.

31. The submission of the draft resolution reflected ongoing attempts by the United States and its Western allies to pursue their hostile agenda and promote a misguided approach to the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. They were attempting to burnish the reputation of the hundreds of thousands of foreign terrorist fighters, whom they characterized as the "moderate opposition", that they had brought into the Syrian Arab Republic from around the world. The authors had not even taken the trouble to update the draft resolution since the seventy-sixth session. In the seventh preambular paragraph of General Assembly resolution [76/228](#), it was stated that 26,727 women and 27,126 children had been killed in the conflict. Those numbers

remained unchanged in the current draft, even though another year had passed. It seemed that there had been no further deaths, which was progress indeed. If that were truly the case, his delegation would vote in favour of the draft resolution. The principles of non-selectivity, impartiality and objectivity must prevail in the area of human rights; the Human Rights Council, under its periodic review, was the competent body to consider the human rights situation in all countries in a manner that respected their sovereignty and territorial integrity. For all those reasons, his delegation categorically rejected the draft resolution and would vote against it. He called on Member States to oppose such selectivity and politicization, to abide by the principles of the Charter and to reject all forms of intimidation and blackmail.

32. *At the request of the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, a recorded vote was taken on draft resolution [A/C.3/77/L.36/Rev.1](#).*

*In favour:*

Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Latvia, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Myanmar, Nauru, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Panama, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Türkiye, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Yemen.

*Against:*

Algeria, Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Syrian Arab Republic, Uzbekistan, Zimbabwe.

*Abstaining:*

Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belize, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Fiji,

Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Paraguay, Philippines, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tajikistan, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam, Zambia.

33. *The draft resolution was adopted by 90 votes to 14, with 68 abstentions.*

34. **Mr. Klima** (Czechia), speaking on behalf of the European Union and its member States; the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Ukraine; the potential candidate countries Bosnia and Herzegovina and Georgia; and in addition, San Marino, said that any sustainable solution to the conflict would require a genuine political transition, in line with Security Council resolution [2254 \(2015\)](#). The European Union called on the Syrian regime, its sponsors and all parties to the conflict to engage fully and in good faith with the Syrian-led political process.

35. The European Union condemned the serious breaches of international law, which might amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity, by the Syrian regime, its allies and other parties to the conflict. The reports of social and demographic engineering and mass waves of displacement, including in parts of the north-west and north-east, were a cause for serious concern. All parties to the conflict, in particular the Syrian regime, must allow safe, full, rapid, unimpeded and sustained cross-line and cross-border access. Humanitarian needs had increased and would likely continue to increase, especially in light of the food crisis resulting from the war of aggression waged against Ukraine by Russia. The European Union supported the findings and recommendations of the report of the Secretary-General on missing people in the Syrian Arab Republic ([A/76/890](#)), as well as the proposal to hold an interactive dialogue prior to 28 February 2023. The European Union would take a positive view of proposals for support of a new mechanism or entity.

36. Accountability remained of the utmost importance. The situation in Syria must be referred to the International Criminal Court and the Syrian regime must cooperate fully with all investigation and accountability mechanisms. The European Union

remained committed to the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Syrian State.

37. **Mr. Magosaki** (Japan) said that his delegation continued to have several concerns regarding the human rights situation in Syria and had voted in favour of the resolution, in the hope that the violence would end as quickly as possible and that human rights would be upheld in Syria. The report of the Secretary-General on missing people in the Syrian Arab Republic ([A/76/890](#)) recommended that the international community contribute to the search for missing persons and support the victims. His delegation hoped that the informal briefing requested in the draft resolution would offer an opportunity to provide detailed and concrete information regarding the recommendations contained in that report and their value added, which would be required for the next steps.

38. **Ms. Eugenio** (Argentina) said that all parties to the conflict must protect the civilian population and uphold human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic. Any solution to the crisis must be based on respect for the sovereignty, unity, independence and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic and must enable the Syrian people to decide their own future through a political process supervised by the United Nations. A political solution was the only way to ensure a sustainable peace.

39. Argentina supported all efforts to achieve justice and accountability for the crimes committed in Syria. An enduring peace in Syria was not possible without justice, which included the verified liberation of all persons detained arbitrarily and the provision of information regarding the whereabouts of missing persons. Her delegation called on all parties to take an approach that prioritized the protection of human rights and international humanitarian law without restriction and the protection of the civilian population throughout the country. Women must be able to participate fully in the political process.

40. **Ms. Mozgovaya** (Belarus) said that country-specific resolutions did not solve human rights situations in any country; rather, they increased confrontation. The ongoing practice by the United States of drafting resolutions behind closed doors ran counter to all United Nations principles. Sending documents to the Committee for its consideration when it was not clear who had discussed or agreed upon them was unacceptable. Belarus consistently opposed country-specific resolutions and had therefore voted against the draft resolution.

41. **Ms. Rajandran** (Singapore) said that her delegation had abstained from the voting on the draft resolution, in line with its principled position regarding

country-specific human rights resolutions in the Third Committee, since such resolutions were highly selective and were driven by political considerations. However, its voting position was not based on the substance of any human rights issues raised in the draft resolution.

42. **Mr. Parga Cintra** (Brazil) said that his delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution. More than half of the Syrian population was in need of life-saving assistance; with no political solution in sight, there could be little disagreement regarding the need to pay close attention to the human rights and humanitarian situation in Syria. The cholera outbreak was another consequence of the precarious situation on the ground.

43. His delegation appreciated the decision to include new paragraphs on the situation of missing persons and supported the work of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic to address the issue. Brazil strongly supported the efforts to determine the fate of missing persons in Syria, including those forcibly disappeared, abducted and arbitrarily detained.

44. It was regrettable, however, that the text of the draft resolution remained long, and its negotiating process had been somewhat opaque. Multiple actors bore responsibility for the human rights violations committed in Syria, notwithstanding the primary responsibility of the Syrian Government towards its population. Only a Syrian-owned, Syrian-led and United Nations-facilitated political process, with due regard for the preservation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Syria, could offer a lasting solution to the conflict.

45. **Ms. Özgür** (Türkiye) said that her delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution, which served as a stark reminder of the widespread violations, atrocities and violence suffered by the Syrian people. It also sent a strong message to the Syrian people of the international community's support for their pursuit of accountability. A sustainable solution to the conflict that met the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people could only be achieved through political means, in line with Security Council resolution [2254 \(2015\)](#). Since delays prolonged the suffering of the Syrian people, the regime was urged to engage in the work of the Constitutional Committee, the only mechanism to advance the political process. Its next round should be convened as soon as possible under the auspices of and hosted by the United Nations. Repeated ceasefire violations, including the recent attacks targeting camps for internally displaced persons in Idlib, undermined efforts to maintain calm and resulted in a further deterioration in the humanitarian situation. Attacks on civilians and civilian

infrastructure must end. The success of a new mechanism as recommended in the report of the Secretary-General on missing people in the Syrian Arab Republic ([A/76/890](#)) would depend on identifying the appropriate mandate. The primary focus should be on locating the missing.

46. The continued insecurity in north-east Syria had been inflicted by the Kurdistan Workers' Party/People's Protection Units (PKK/YPG), the terrorist organization of the so-called "Syrian Democratic Forces". The threat posed to the territorial integrity of Syria by the terrorist activity of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) had never been more alarming. It carried out an average of 100 terrorist attacks a month in northern Syria, in which approximately 500 Syrians had been murdered over the previous two years. It abducted and recruited minors, seized property, disrupted water and electricity supplies in the north, usurped natural resources, attempted social and demographic engineering and prevented people, including Syrian Yazidis and Syrian Kurds, from returning home. The terrorist attack in Istanbul on 13 November 2022, which had killed 6 people, including children, and wounded more than 80 others, was another example of the threat posed by the Kurdistan Workers' Party/People's Protection Units (PKK/YPG), not only to Syrian civilians and to the territorial integrity of Syria, but also to the national security of Türkiye. Supporting one terrorist organization under the pretext of fighting another could never be condoned. Türkiye was as determined as ever to combat terrorism.

47. **Ms. Arab Bafrani** (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that it was shameful for human rights discourse to be used as a political weapon. Her delegation, along with many others, vehemently rejected the political charade and the dishonesty shown by the sponsors. Contrary to the claims made by the United States regarding human rights protection, Iranians continued to suffer greatly as a result of the brutal sanctions imposed by that country, which constituted a violation of human rights and a crime against humanity. As the only country that was not a party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and a country that had not ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities or the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the United States was not qualified to lecture other Member States on human rights.

48. Canada had positioned itself as a self-appointed guardian of human rights, yet based on its track record of discrimination against Indigenous Peoples and the shocking news of ethnic cleansing of Indigenous children at residential schools, it should reconsider its



policy of launching smear campaigns against the Islamic Republic of Iran. The European countries, which were also proponents of the biased draft resolution, were likewise urged to address the deep-rooted human rights challenges on their soil. Iran was not perfect, and did not recognize the perfection they prescribed. Any advocacy for human rights by the main sponsors of country-specific resolutions was a complete scam.

49. To enhance the credibility of human rights discourse, Iran sought respectful dialogue without recrimination or blame. Iran attached the highest importance to cooperation and interaction with OHCHR and with non-discriminatory intergovernmental human rights mechanisms, such as the universal periodic review. Accordingly, the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights had conducted a visit to Iran in 2022. Promoting and protecting human rights and dignity was the Government's mission and responsibility, but the main proponents of the draft resolution denied all of her Government's achievements in that regard, in particular concerning the advancement of women and girls. Women in Iran enjoyed the right to education, to work, to own and sell property, to seek protection under the law, to vote, to participate in civic and political engagement, and had opportunities to advance themselves.

50. According to several principles enshrined in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Government was responsible for protecting the right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. However, violence and disorder should not be categorized as peaceful assembly, since they violated the human rights of others. In such circumstances, law enforcement officers were required to take appropriate measures to maintain and ensure safety and security and public order.

51. The Committee should conduct its work in an objective, transparent, non-selective, constructive, non-confrontational and non-politicized manner. Her delegation categorically rejected the falsehoods and accusations made by certain delegations, in particular the delegations of the United Kingdom and the United States, regarding recent developments in Iran. Contrary to the claim made by the representative of the United Kingdom at the 52nd meeting, the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were and had been present in the meeting room. While her delegation supported the participation of NGOs with respect to the existing rules of procedure, it rejected the claim made by the delegation of the United Kingdom in that regard. In addition, her delegation had been astonished by the comments and the inaccurate reading and expansive

interpretation of Islamic sharia from the representative of Saudi Arabia. Similarly, as a State Member of the United Nations, Saudi Arabia must abide by its international obligations, respect international norms and behave responsibly by refraining from using insulting and improper terms while addressing other sovereign States.

52. **Mr. Arbeiter** (Canada), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that when the Committee had taken action at its 52nd meeting on the draft resolution on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, several delegations had denounced his country for longstanding systemic violations of the human rights of Indigenous Peoples, in particular women and girls, and the victims of the residential school system. That characterization was accurate. In Canada, Indigenous women and girls were disproportionately affected by all forms of violence. The residential school system was an abhorrent scar on the country's history. The trauma it had caused, and continued to cause, was intergenerational.

53. However, the Prime Minister of Canada had recognized those facts on multiple occasions and his Government had committed to working to transform its relationship with Indigenous Peoples, based on recognition, respect, cooperation and partnership. Recognition involved acknowledging wrongdoing. In 2008, the Parliament of Canada had issued a historic apology to the victims of the residential school system for the heinous acts perpetrated against them. The Pope had also acknowledged the role of the Catholic Church in that practice. Respect involved establishing open, transparent and inclusive inquiries. Canada had set up a truth and reconciliation commission and a national inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. In both cases, the victims and survivors themselves were at the centre. Cooperation involved accepting their recommendations and implementing their calls to action. His Government had committed to doing so. Partnership involved working together to educate communities throughout the country about historical and present challenges. Canada had recently established a national day to call attention to the role all Canadians could and should play in contributing to reconciliation. Partnership also involved being open to scrutiny, including internationally, for the degree to which Canada had lived up to the standards it had set for itself. Canada welcomed that scrutiny precisely because it could make the country stronger.

54. Whenever the delegation of Canada participated in the Third Committee, the Economic and Social Council, the Human Rights Council or any other body in the United Nations system, it did not seek to avoid the issue.

Canada did not deny entry to special procedure mandate holders; it did not suggest that such bodies or mechanisms were somehow selective, partial, subjective or political; it did not try to deflect attention by deploying red herrings; it did not resort to the practice of responding to a difficult question by making a counter-accusation, because it did not accept that historical or current challenges somehow prohibited it from also holding other Member States to account for the international legal obligations they had voluntarily taken on. Whataboutism served no one, least of all the victims of systemic human rights violations.

55. He agreed with the characterization of the women and girls of Iran put forward by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Canada was in awe of their unwavering ability to exercise agency in the current circumstances and fully shared her confidence in the strength that they were demonstrating.

**Agenda item 57: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions (continued) (A/C.3/77/L.55)**

*Draft resolution A/C.3/77/L.55: Assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa*

56. **The Chair** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

57. **Mr. Salah** (Libya), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of African States, said that around 30 million internally displaced persons, refugees and asylum seekers lived in Africa. The text was a technical update of the resolution adopted by the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session. He invited the Committee to adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

58. **Mr. Mahmassani** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the following delegations had become sponsors of the draft resolution: Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Canada, Ecuador, Georgia, Greece, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Palau, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden, Türkiye, United States of America and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

59. He then noted that the following delegations also wished to become sponsors: Bangladesh and Pakistan.

60. *Draft resolution A/C.3/77/L.55 was adopted.*

61. **Mr. Ivanyi** (Hungary) said that his delegation was deeply concerned by the continually rising numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons in Africa and had accordingly joined the consensus on the draft resolution. Nevertheless, Hungary had not endorsed and

was not participating in the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees and could not therefore accept any reference to it in international documents. In view of the above, it wished to disassociate itself from paragraph 4 of the draft resolution.

*The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.*