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Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 4 April 2024, at 9.30 a.m.

President: Mr. Zniber(Morocco)

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The meeting was called to order at 9.30 a.m.

Agenda item 3: Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development (continued)
([A/HRC/55/L.9](#), [A/HRC/55/L.22](#), [A/HRC/55/L.26](#), [A/HRC/55/L.31](#) and
[A/HRC/55/L.33/Rev.1](#))

1. **The President** said that statements of the programme budget implications of the draft resolutions under consideration at the current meeting had been published on the Council's extranet.

Draft resolution [A/HRC/55/L.9](#): Combating discrimination, violence and harmful practices against intersex persons

2. **Ms. Schroderus-Fox** (Finland), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the main sponsors, namely Australia, Chile, South Africa and her own delegation, said that it was the first Human Rights Council draft resolution dedicated to the topic of intersex persons. That topic had previously been addressed in three joint statements, the most recent of which, in 2023, had been supported by over a quarter of the Council's membership, and had also been addressed by special procedures of the Council and regional human rights bodies. The Council should take the lead in that domain, as combating violence and discrimination was at the core of its mandate. Intersex persons were born with biological variations in sex characteristics. They were often subjected to medically unnecessary procedures performed without their full, free and informed consent. Infanticides of intersex babies had been reported. Misconceptions, inaccurate information and stigma persisted.

3. The negotiations on the draft resolution had broadened the main sponsors' perspective and hopefully also that of other delegations. Compromises had been found and, crucially, a common understanding had been reached that intersex persons lived in all societies and could face discrimination and violence throughout their lives. The use of established terminology was key; accordingly, the terminology in the draft resolution mirrored that used previously by the human rights treaty bodies, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the World Health Organization (WHO). A definition of the term "intersex" was provided in the draft resolution, which included a decision to request a report and convene a panel discussion that would offer an opportunity for further exchanges. The aim of the draft resolution was to protect the human rights of intersex persons and increase understanding of the discrimination and violence they faced. She urged the Council to adopt the draft resolution by consensus to break the silence on the issue and send a clear message to the intersex community that it had been heard.

4. **The President** said that 14 States had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution.

General statements made before the voting

5. **Mr. Nkosi** (South Africa) said that his delegation welcomed the consideration of that important topic by the Council as a matter of principle. South Africa remained committed to the anti-discrimination agenda and for that reason was among the main sponsors of the draft resolution, by which the Council would recognize a particular form of discrimination on the basis of sex, specifically sex characteristics that did not fit the typical definition of male and female. The draft resolution was intended to create awareness of the plight of intersex persons, who could be found in all societies and faced discrimination in various areas of their lives, including sports, health and education. Such discrimination undermined their quality of life and dignity and, in extreme cases, the stigma against them led to violence and harmful practices such as forced castration and sterilization, and even infanticide.

6. The Human Rights Council was the appropriate forum to raise awareness and share best practices aimed at ensuring that intersex persons enjoyed the inalienable rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. While there was undoubtedly a lack of awareness about intersex persons, his delegation was alarmed at the misinformation and disinformation being spread to undermine efforts to spotlight the plight of intersex persons. The main sponsors had held extensive consultations and hoped that the panel discussion and report called for in the draft resolution would help to increase

awareness and understanding. His delegation hoped that the Council would adopt the draft resolution by consensus; if a vote was requested, it asked the delegations that could not support the text to abstain.

7. **Mr. Habib** (Indonesia), speaking on behalf of a group of Council members to be listed on the Council's extranet, said that the States concerned reaffirmed their unwavering commitment to the protection of all people from discrimination and violence on the basis of race, colour, sex, language, religion, nationality, birth or social origin, in accordance with international human rights law, and stressed the importance of upholding the principle of universality that guided the work of the Council. However, they deeply regretted that the draft resolution did not reflect that fundamental principle in that it advocated elements that were not universal.

8. First, the term "intersex" was not recognized in any international legal instrument or intergovernmentally agreed document and was unknown in the national legal systems and social context of many member States. In a spirit of constructive engagement, a number of delegations had expressed a preference for alternative terms. Secondly, the definition of intersex persons contained in the draft did not include references that were universally recognized and formally acknowledged by States. Thirdly, the Council was not the appropriate venue for accurately defining medical conditions. Fourthly, categorical opinions on medical treatment in such cases should be made by medical experts and practitioners, not by the Council. Nevertheless, the delegations concerned remained steadfast in their commitment to combating discrimination and violence against anyone, anywhere, pursuant to the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and their respective constitutional and legal provisions. Speaking as the representative of Indonesia, he requested a vote on the draft resolution and said that his delegation would abstain from voting.

9. **Mr. Da Silva Nunes** (Brazil) said that his Government had established a working group on intersex issues under the Ministry of Human Rights and Citizenship. Throughout the consultations on the draft resolution, in which civil society and intersex persons had taken part, the main sponsors had shown flexibility in accommodating views and suggested wording for the pioneering draft resolution. Protecting the human rights of intersex persons was part of the fight against all forms of discrimination. The draft resolution was an important step in giving the issue visibility and in providing States with opportunities to discuss and work together towards solutions. The report requested from OHCHR and the panel discussion to be held at the Council's sixtieth session would increase the Council's understanding of the issues faced by intersex persons, provide avenues for combating discrimination, violence and harmful practices and help States find ways to support those persons. Brazil hoped that all members would support the draft resolution.

10. **Ms. Fuentes Julio** (Chile), noting that the purpose of the draft resolution was to raise awareness of the human rights situation of intersex persons, said that "intersex" was not an identity; it was a word used to describe persons in all societies who were born with variations in their innate sex characteristics. The concept had been in use by WHO since 2014 and was used by almost the entire United Nations system. The goal of the draft resolution was to protect intersex persons from stigma, discrimination and violence. The medical considerations that such persons might face should not prevent the Council from taking a stance on the relevant human rights issues. Intersexuality was not a matter of sexual orientation or gender identity and did not imply the creation of a category separate from "female" and "male".

11. The main sponsors had led a transparent, dialogue-based process aimed at achieving consensus on an important topic. The Council had a historic opportunity to take a decisive step towards fulfilling its essential mandate. The draft resolution did not create new rights; it merely reaffirmed that all persons had the right to a life free from physical and psychological violence and to physical integrity. Therefore, her delegation called on all the members to support the draft resolution.

12. **Ms. Taylor** (United States of America), noting that the Council stood at a historic juncture with the potential adoption of an unprecedented resolution, said that her delegation was profoundly grateful to the main sponsors for their pivotal role and constructive

engagement in shaping the draft resolution and stood firmly in support of the text, which did not create new rights. The draft resolution underscored the need for a rights-based approach and avoided pathologizing and stigmatizing language, instead advocating the autonomy, dignity and equality that all persons deserved regardless of their sex characteristics. She applauded the collaborative effort that had led to the landmark draft resolution. It was an opportunity for States to affirm their collective responsibility to uphold the inherent dignity of all individuals. While her delegation had hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus, it would vote in favour and urged all members to do likewise.

13. **Mr. Bekkers** (Kingdom of the Netherlands) said that his Government fully supported the draft resolution, which built on the work and statements of the treaty bodies, special procedures and regional human rights bodies regarding the issues faced by intersex persons on account of their innate physical characteristics, including forced medical interventions, denial of legal recognition and registration at birth, restricted access to legal remedies and justice, stigma, and discrimination in access to education, health and employment. The main sponsors should be commended for their strategic and inclusive approach, which had resulted in a balanced draft, and for their willingness to incorporate the considerable input from the informal consultations. In the light of article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which proclaimed the equal dignity and rights of all persons, his delegation had hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus. However, it would vote in favour of the text and encouraged all the members to do the same.

14. **Ms. Gillhoff** (Germany) said that strong, diverse support on the topic of intersex persons in the past had shown that there was cross-regional understanding of the topic and of the importance of protecting those persons. Intersex persons faced discrimination and harmful practices across countries and cultures; it was therefore high time to shed light on those issues. Germany had robust legal provisions prohibiting unnecessary medical procedures on persons with innate variations in sex characteristics. However, more remained to be done to ensure that all persons covered by the draft resolution were protected against all forms of discrimination and harmful practices, which were often the result of stigma, lack of understanding or lack of information. The matter was first and foremost a human rights issue and the Council was the appropriate forum to discuss it. The first step in overcoming the stereotypes about intersex persons was to refer to them by their preferred name. It was regrettable that consensus had not been reached, but in any event Germany would vote in favour of the draft resolution and called on others to do likewise.

15. **Mr. Alimbayev** (Kazakhstan), commending the main sponsors for their tireless efforts on what was an important initiative, said that his delegation shared the concern that individuals with sex characteristics that differed from medical norms for female or male bodies, also known as intersex persons, faced stigma, misconceptions, violence and multiple forms of discrimination. It therefore supported the initiative to raise the issue in the Council in order to raise awareness and address it from a human rights perspective. His delegation also welcomed the fact that the draft resolution contained a request to OHCHR to prepare a report taking into account the diverse approaches of States, human rights mechanisms, United Nations agencies, academia, health professionals, national human rights institutions and civil society. Sharing best practices from around the world was a means of promoting the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health and of combating violence and discrimination.

16. Unfortunately, the Council had been unable to agree on the appropriate term to describe the condition of the persons concerned in a way that was not harmful and was acceptable to certain delegations, including his own, in the light of their national legislation. Furthermore, his delegation took the view that some elements of the draft relating to medical interventions and treatments required the opinion of health experts. As a result, his delegation would abstain from voting. However, that decision in no way implied that Kazakhstan did not support the spirit and noble objectives of the draft resolution, as the country remained committed to combating discrimination and violence against all persons in all circumstances.

Statements made in explanation of vote before the voting

17. **Mr. Bahzad** (Qatar), speaking on behalf of the members of the Group of Arab States that were members of the Council, said that the Group wished to reaffirm its stance against

all forms of violence and discrimination against any person and its belief in the right of all persons to enjoy their rights on an equal footing. The Group had presented constructive ideas to make the text of the draft resolution more balanced and to align it with the principles and standards of international treaties. However, the Group felt strongly that the Council was not the appropriate forum for discussing the complex issue at hand, especially given its medical aspects and the need to ensure that the text was adapted to the needs of the persons concerned and the various commitments of interested parties.

18. For that reason, the Group had wished to replace the term “intersex persons” with the term “persons with disorders of sex development”, which was the more scientific and medically appropriate description used, *inter alia*, by WHO. The Group had clearly expressed the need for the Council to respect international law when discussing new topics and had explicitly stated that creating new standards for protection would have dire consequences for universal human rights principles and would cause needless divisions within the Council. Moreover, the cultural and religious backgrounds of certain societies must be taken into account, meaning that a monolithic interpretation could not be imposed on all countries. Since the main sponsors had disregarded those considerations, the Group of Arab States supported the call by the delegation of Indonesia for the draft resolution to be put to a vote.

19. **Ms. Li Xiaomei** (China) said that her Government supported the adoption by the Council of thematic resolutions to promote and protect specific human rights, and welcomed the main sponsors’ emphasis on the fact that the draft resolution focused only on issues relating to discrimination against intersex persons, did not address sexual orientation or gender identity and was not intended to create a new gender or new gender rights. However, her delegation had consistently stated that all resolutions should take into account and fully respect the members’ national contexts and judicial practice, as well as their historical, cultural and religious traditions. The Chinese delegation would abstain from voting on the draft resolution.

20. **The President** said that Luxembourg and France had withdrawn their sponsorship of the draft resolution.

21. **Mr. Bichler** (Luxembourg) said that the sole purpose of the draft resolution was to protect the human rights of intersex persons all over the world, including children, who experienced violence in the form of stigmatization, discrimination and harmful practices, such as unnecessary surgical interventions, due to their innate characteristics. Violations of their rights, including the rights to health, to life, to freedom from torture and ill-treatment, to physical and psychological integrity and to equality and non-discrimination, had already been reported by OHCHR, the treaty bodies and special procedures of the Council. His own country still had progress to make in that domain. The draft resolution included a request for a report from OHCHR, with the aim of improving understanding and awareness of the rights of intersex persons and providing examples of good practice that States could replicate to protect the rights of such persons in their territories. The terminology in the draft resolution was clear and widely used by international and regional human rights organizations and bodies, as well as civil society and academia. For all those reasons, his delegation would vote in favour of the draft resolution and called on all the members to do the same.

22. **Ms. Osman** (Malaysia) said that, while Malaysia was committed to upholding the human rights of all individuals and to combating violence and discrimination on any grounds, it regretted that, despite the clear concerns raised by delegations during the informal consultations, the draft resolution did not take into account different legal systems or local sensitivities. Her delegation’s position on the issue was based on the definition established by the Malaysian Ministry of Health, whereby intersex persons were defined as individuals with disorders of sex development, including congenital conditions. There was currently no internationally agreed definition of intersex persons; the term “intersex” was not universally recognized and, in some cases, could be derogatory when translated into local languages. Therefore, the use of the term could do more harm than good. Her delegation regretted that the draft resolution forcibly imposed an inaccurate definition of a medical condition even though neither the Council nor human rights experts had the expertise to make categorical judgments about such conditions. In addition, the text reflected a narrow perspective on the types of treatment and intervention that persons with that medical condition might need,

without sound scientific evidence. Consequently, her delegation would abstain from voting on the draft resolution.

23. **Ms. Haque** (Bangladesh) said that her delegation had a number of concerns about the draft resolution. First, the term “intersex” was not recognized in any international legal instrument or intergovernmentally agreed document and was unknown in the national legal systems and social contexts of many members of the Council. The alternative terms suggested by delegations had been overlooked in the draft resolution. Secondly, the definition of intersex persons as persons with innate variations in sex characteristics was vague and arbitrary, and excluded persons affected by medical conditions resulting from anomalies in sex development from the scope of the draft resolution. Thirdly, OHCHR did not have the appropriate expertise and objectivity to make recommendations in that domain, given the lack of consensus among States on the very definition of “intersex persons”.

24. Persons with conditions similar to that of intersex persons existed in all societies. Bangladesh had adopted a policy on persons who were born with such medical conditions, who were known as *hijras* and were recognized in civil registration documents as a means of better promoting and protecting their rights. In addition, Bangladesh had implemented several initiatives to rehabilitate and mainstream *hijras*, and a few *hijras* had been elected to local public office.

25. The indefinite and subjective scope of the draft resolution failed to capture the diverging views in the Council and did a disservice to the persons whom the initiative was intended to benefit. Accordingly, her delegation would abstain from voting on the draft resolution. Lastly, Bangladesh reserved the right to interpret and implement the provisions of the resolution in accordance with national laws and universally recognized international human rights, with full respect for the various religions, ethical values and cultural backgrounds of its people, and understood that neither the text before it nor any other Council resolution changed the current state of conventional or customary international law or imposed any legal obligations.

26. **Mr. Bonnafont** (France), noting that the main sponsors represented the four corners of the world, said that his delegation would vote in favour of the draft resolution. The negotiations had been led in a constructive and transparent manner, enabling the situation of intersex persons to be raised for the first time in the Council. Intersex persons had a right to be welcomed by society on an equal footing with everyone else. The draft resolution’s purpose was not to address a medical condition but to ensure that rights were respected. Too often, intersex persons were rejected by their families or society and were subjected to discrimination, violence, isolation and stigmatization. Harmful practices occurred in all countries, and all countries had a duty to combat them. The draft resolution was concise, used clear language based on important international texts adopted in recent years by international human rights bodies and provided for a report and a panel discussion with a view to informing the Council’s deliberations in that field.

27. The request for a vote was based on the argument that the term “intersex” was not recognized in law. But who made law if not bodies such as the Council? The Council, which was addressing situations of which it had previously been unaware, had the duty and the honour to be a pioneer in the creation of international law, and all States had a responsibility to apply it in consonance with their legal frameworks. The principle that all persons were born free and equal in dignity and rights should guide the Council’s work on intersex persons. His delegation called on all the members to support the draft resolution.

28. **Mr. Habib** (Indonesia) said that Indonesia was steadfastly committed to upholding the principles of non-discrimination and the prevention of violence against all persons, irrespective of their sex, birth and other factors and in accordance with its obligations under international human rights law. His delegation had actively participated in the informal consultations with a view to strengthening protection for the rights of persons with medical conditions of the kind referred to in the draft resolution. It regretted, however, that the text reflected a concept and definition that was not universally recognized and lacked any basis in international law. Several delegations, including his own, had proposed that the term “intersex” should be replaced with “disorders of sex development”, but that suggestion had not been accommodated.

29. The terms “intersex” and “persons with innate variations in sex characteristics” were not recognized in Indonesian legislation. Nonetheless, national legislation fully guaranteed, for all persons, the right of access to health-care services, including sexual and reproductive health services, in line with the specific national context. Since legal clarity was crucial for ensuring full protection of the rights of persons affected by the medical condition in question, the vague definition of “intersex persons” put forward in the draft resolution, along with the failure to address the need to distinguish clearly between intersex persons and non-intersex persons, was regrettable. The possibility that the ambiguous concept proposed might lead some individuals to arbitrarily identify as intersex, as part of their social identity, was of deep concern to his delegation. The close association of “intersex” with a sociopolitical movement that advanced sexual orientation and gender identity advocacy and the term’s possible interpretation as a sex other than male and female were of particular concern. The matter should be approached primarily from a medical perspective, not from a social standpoint that was not universal.

30. Since the main sponsors’ intention had been to exclude the issues of sexual orientation and gender identity from the scope of the text, his delegation would observe their continued commitment to that approach in the future, should the text be adopted. However, it would abstain from voting and wished to dissociate itself from the paragraphs containing the terms “intersex” and “persons with innate variations in sex characteristics”.

31. *At the request of the representative of Indonesia, a recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Albania, Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Honduras, India, Japan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Romania, South Africa, United States of America, Viet Nam.

Against:

None.

Abstaining:

Algeria, Bangladesh, Benin, Burundi, Cameroon, China, Côte d’Ivoire, Eritrea, Gambia, Georgia, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Morocco, Paraguay, Qatar, Somalia, Sudan, United Arab Emirates.

32. *Draft resolution A/HRC/55/L.9 was adopted by 24 votes to none, with 23 abstentions.*

Draft resolution A/HRC/55/L.22: Rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities

33. **Ms. Fuchs** (Observer for Austria), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the main sponsors, namely Mexico, Slovenia and her own delegation, said that the thematic focus of the current draft of the Council’s biennial resolution on the issue reflected the theme of the discussions held at the annual Forum on Minority Issues, which, in November 2023, had concerned the importance of cohesive societies. The role of inclusion and effective participation in ensuring cohesion across the world’s diverse societies had been recognized in the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities contained in General Assembly resolution 47/135 of 1992. The Declaration affirmed the right of persons belonging to minorities to participate effectively in cultural, religious, social, economic and public life.

34. Through the draft resolution, the Council would continue its constructive engagement on the topic, based on the consensual approach taken thus far. The strong cross-regional support and the openness that had once again been apparent during the consultations had been particularly welcome. The sponsors had endeavoured to accommodate many of the comments received while maintaining the balance and focus of the text. Her delegation was confident that, as in previous years, the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

35. **The President** announced that 15 States had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution, which had no programme budget implications.

General statements made before the decision

36. **Mr. Guillermet Fernández** (Costa Rica) said that his delegation had welcomed the opportunity to continue discussing the complex and intersecting forms of discrimination, exclusion and marginalization that ethnic minorities faced. It thanked the main sponsors for the openness shown during the discussions and the balance achieved in the final text. Given the devastating impact of hate speech, discrimination and violence directed against minorities, his delegation would continue to advocate measures to ensure that minorities could live a life of freedom in which their diversity, culture, language, religion, traditions and customs were respected. The calls made in the draft resolution to redouble efforts to combat statelessness, to ensure the participation of persons belonging to minorities and to recognize their contributions to development throughout the world were especially important in that respect. His delegation supported the draft resolution and hoped that it would be adopted by consensus.

37. **Ms. Taylor** (United States of American) said that her delegation was pleased to have joined the sponsors of the draft resolution and commended the main sponsors' transparent and constructive approach. The inclusion of a call to prevent and end statelessness among persons belonging to minorities was particularly appreciated; her delegation had been one of the main sponsors of Human Rights Council resolution 53/16 on the right to a nationality and welcomed the valuable contributions of the #IBelong Campaign run by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Global Alliance to End Statelessness. By working together to find durable solutions, States could ensure that all persons, including members of national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, could access the protections that having a nationality afforded.

38. **Ms. Li Xiaomei** (China) said that minority groups were equal members of the human family and that promoting social inclusion and addressing the racism, xenophobia, intolerance and other forms of unfair treatment that minorities faced were common goals of the international community. Her delegation commended the emphasis that the draft resolution placed on inequality and poverty as the root causes of violations of the rights of minorities, as well as the call for more inclusive policies that advanced minorities' equal participation in economic and social life and in the full enjoyment of all human rights. It welcomed the sponsors' openness to suggestions, which had resulted in a balanced text, and would join the consensus on the draft resolution.

39. *Draft resolution A/HRC/55/L.22 was adopted.*

Draft resolution A/HRC/55/L.26: Freedom of religion or belief

40. **Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve** (Belgium), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the main sponsors, namely the States members of the European Union, said that its aim was to stress the importance of promoting and protecting the right to freedom of religion or belief, to condemn all forms of intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief and to denounce any advocacy of religious hatred, both online and offline. The right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief was a universal human right that all persons should be able to exercise individually and collectively, in public and in private, regardless of who they were, where they lived and what they believed or did not believe. However, around the world people continued to be discriminated against, and in some cases even persecuted and killed, because of their religion or belief, or lack thereof.

41. Given the close relationship between the draft resolution and the Council's annual resolution on combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against, persons based on religion or belief, which had traditionally been introduced by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and the fact that the two resolutions had been running in parallel for over a decade, the European Union member States had hoped that OIC would also submit its resolution for adoption at the fifty-fifth session. The consensus in place since 2011 had allowed the Council to speak with one voice on the need to promote and protect the right to freedom of religion or belief and combat religious intolerance. The two resolutions had become the backbone of international efforts to foster global dialogue on promoting a culture of tolerance and peace, based on respect for human rights and diversity of religion and belief, at all levels.

42. The European Union member States remained hopeful that the international community would continue to speak with one voice; joining forces and retaining the delicate balance between the two resolutions was the best way forward. They stood ready to revitalize existing processes such as the Istanbul Process for Combating Intolerance, Discrimination and Incitement to Hatred and/or Violence on the Basis of Religion or Belief and would continue to work on the basis of the Rabat Plan of Action, taking the Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights into account. The international community should continue to foster and implement essential tools of that nature that could help States to tackle religious intolerance in a human rights-compliant manner. Given the importance of the matter at hand, the European Union hoped that the Council would once again adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

43. **The President** said the 18 States had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution.

General statements made before the decision

44. **Mr. Staniulis** (Lithuania) said that, more than a decade previously, the Council had reached a consensus linking the resolution on freedom of religion or belief with the resolution on combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against, persons based on religion or belief, which was traditionally introduced by OIC. Together, the two resolutions had since played a crucial role in advancing global dialogue and promoting a culture of tolerance and peace at all levels. If the OIC-sponsored resolution had been introduced concurrently, it would once again have enhanced efforts to strengthen consensus. His delegation remained hopeful that the Council could continue to advance along a joint and consensual path.

45. **Mr. Quintanilla Román** (Cuba) said that Cuba strongly condemned all forms of intolerance, including Islamophobia. It agreed that the right to choose one's religion or belief must be protected and that all persons and all religions should coexist in peace and harmony. His delegation hoped that the draft resolution would prompt States to strengthen their national legal frameworks and step up their efforts to prevent intolerance, discrimination and violence based on religion or belief. The exercise of freedom of opinion and expression did not justify the violation of other collective and individual rights, and the limits on the exercise of that freedom were duly recognized in international human rights instruments and the domestic legislation of many countries.

46. Cuba also categorically rejected all attempts to invoke freedom of religion as a manipulative means to promote subversive and politically destabilizing agendas and actions that were totally unconnected to religious practice and the defence of human rights; no country had the right to declare itself a prophet or guarantor of religious freedom throughout the world. Cuba condemned the unilateral formulation, by the United States Department of State, of a special watch list of countries of particular concern, which Cuba did not recognize, as the list had no moral, ethical or legal foundation. As a sign of his country's commitment to promoting and protecting all human rights and ensuring the peaceful coexistence of all religions and beliefs, his delegation would join the consensus on the draft resolution.

47. **Ms. Taylor** (United States of America) said that the United States was dedicated to fostering freedom of religion or belief and stood firm against hatred based on religious identity. All persons throughout the world had the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief, including the right to change their belief or to hold no belief. Her delegation strongly supported the draft resolution and hoped that the Council could continue to speak with one voice on that important topic, as it had done for over a decade. The current climate of rising religious intolerance demanded action to revive and strengthen the Istanbul Process in order to combat intolerance while safeguarding the freedoms of expression, religion and belief. While the United States strongly supported freedom of expression, it remained concerned that acts of religious hate such as the desecration of the Qur'an, the Torah scroll and other sacred religious texts created an environment of fear and a risk of increased hatred or incitement that affected the ability of members of religious groups to freely exercise their right to freedom of religion or belief. The United States unconditionally condemned such hateful acts.

48. **Mr. Foradori** (Argentina) said that human rights were universal, interdependent, indivisible, equal and non-discriminatory, and were essentially intended to protect individuals. As Argentina firmly condemned all forms of racial and religious discrimination, intolerance, hatred and violence, his delegation wished to reiterate its concern about the acts of that nature that continued to occur throughout the world. States must press forward with initiatives that promoted cultural and religious harmony. His delegation would continue to contribute constructively to discussions with a view to achieving balanced texts that reconciled the different positions and to ensuring that draft resolutions were compatible with international human rights standards. It welcomed the text introduced by the European Union, which underscored that freedom of religion or belief and freedom of expression were interdependent, interrelated and mutually reinforcing and that there was no hierarchy between them. Both rights played a key role in the fight against all forms of intolerance and discrimination based on religion. Lastly, his delegation wished to express its deep concern about the restrictions that some States imposed on freedom of expression as a means of combating hate speech. Restrictions on freedom of speech should remain an exception and international human rights standards should be strictly respected.

49. *Draft resolution A/HRC/55/L.26 was adopted.*

Draft resolution A/HRC/55/L.31: Human rights and a culture of peace

50. **Mr. Kah** (Gambia), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the main sponsors, namely Bangladesh, Botswana, Chile, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Kazakhstan, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Panama, South Sudan, the Sudan and his own delegation, said that the diversity of such a large group of main sponsors underscored the universal appeal and necessity of its mission to foster peace across continents. The remarkable enthusiasm and vibrant engagement apparent during the informal consultations were a testament to the widespread backing that the initiative enjoyed and the depth of its potential impact in terms of advancing shared goals for peace.

51. The draft resolution was anchored in the profound belief that peace and human rights were inextricably linked. It was not intended to introduce new rights and obligations, but rather to operationalize and amplify existing commitments to building a sustainable and peaceful future. The text drew inspiration from the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1999 but had been carefully differentiated from previous resolutions in order to avoid overlap with the work of the General Assembly. The draft resolution contained a request for the organization of two workshops in Geneva, in a hybrid and fully accessible format, to enhance understanding and cooperation on the issue. His delegation hoped that the draft resolution would spark conversation and constructive dialogue on the link between supporting human rights and creating peace and the special role of the Council in promoting that link, and called upon the members to adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

52. **The President** announced that 34 States had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution.

General statements made before the decision

53. **Ms. Haque** (Bangladesh) said that her delegation was honoured to be one of the main sponsors of the draft resolution. The culture of peace was inextricably linked to the foreign policy vision of her Government; when first addressing the United Nations General Assembly in 1974, her country's founding father, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, had observed that peace was an imperative for the survival of mankind and represented the deepest aspirations of men and women throughout the world. That vision had shaped the enduring commitment to the cause of global peace and security that had led the delegation of Bangladesh to introduce before the General Assembly, in 1999, the text that had been adopted as resolution 53/243 on the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace. The culture of peace continued to occupy a pivotal position on the country's multilateral agenda. Bangladesh had introduced and sponsored multiple resolutions aimed at promoting peace, tolerance and harmony, firmly rejected violence, stereotyping and intolerance and worked proactively to prevent conflict.

54. Her delegation's support for the draft resolution was consistent with her country's support for work on a culture of peace in other United Nations forums. The draft resolution would enable the Human Rights Council to play a role in addressing the concept of peace and its interconnectedness with human rights, building on General Assembly resolution 53/243 and the corresponding annual follow-up resolutions and drawing on agreed language from earlier Council resolutions and General Assembly declarations. The Council was uniquely positioned to ensure greater coherence in the way that those topics were addressed. The initiative was driven not by politics, but by a shared commitment to exploring and understanding the interlinkages between human rights and a culture of peace. The text was consistent with the consensual approach to the topic that her delegation had always taken. She invited all members of the Council to adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

55. **Mr. Dan** (Benin) said that, in reaffirming the durable link between human rights and a culture of peace and requesting the organization of workshops to promote reflection and interactive dialogue on the topic, the draft resolution was particularly pertinent in an international context marked by major crises that seriously imperilled international peace and security. The culture of peace and the protection and promotion of human rights were cardinal principles in the Constitution of Benin. In 2015, under the auspices of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Benin had hosted the launch of the African Initiative on Education for Peace and Development through Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, which pursued the same objectives as the draft resolution. Accordingly, his delegation was pleased to have joined the sponsors of the draft resolution and invited the Council to adopt it by consensus.

56. **Mr. Nkosi** (South Africa), noting that the Council was considering the draft resolution at a time when the world was at a crossroads due to the genocide unfolding before its eyes, said that his country's foreign policy was premised on the promotion and protection of human rights, the pacific settlement of disputes and respect for international law. His Government drew inspiration from the Charter of the United Nations and the Constitutive Act of the African Union, which enjoined States to seek peaceful multilateral means instead of power-based unilateral solutions to conflicts. The draft resolution was intended to establish a stronger link between human rights and peacebuilding. It prioritized the role of States while emphasizing the importance of other stakeholders, including civil society, in promoting and strengthening a culture of peace, highlighting in particular the role of women and youth. In addition, it called on States to take effective measures to uphold and promote peace and security, development and human rights. For those reasons, his delegation had decided to join the sponsors and encourage other States to contribute to the promotion of human rights and a culture of peace by adopting appropriate and effective measures. Peace should be a goal for all nations, and that goal should be pursued through internationally agreed non-violent means and mechanisms. His delegation was hopeful that the adoption of the draft resolution by consensus would reinforce ongoing efforts to end the genocide unfolding in Gaza and the violations of international law and human rights occurring throughout the world.

57. **Ms. Duncan Villalobos** (Costa Rica) said that the draft resolution highlighted the importance of a culture of peace for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Declaration on the Right to Peace, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and other documents for the promotion and protection of human rights. A key aspect of the draft resolution was the importance it attached to the participation of civil society and national human rights institutions in the promotion of peace and the settlement of disputes. The media, which played an important role in fostering an informed citizenry, must be free, independent, pluralistic and diverse. All States had an obligation to comply with the rules of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, including in situations of armed conflict, to minimize the suffering of the civilian population. Her delegation welcomed the request made in the draft resolution for OHCHR to organize workshops on human rights and a culture of peace, with the participation of all relevant stakeholders.

58. **Ms. Fuentes Julio** (Chile) said that, in the light of the current international situation, there was an urgent need to promote a sustainable culture of peace, with a human rights-based approach. The Human Rights Council was in a strategic position to lead those efforts. She

trusted that the draft resolution would encourage further conversation on the undeniable relationship that existed between human rights and a culture of peace and that it would become a first step towards meaningful integration of the two complementary issues. Her delegation called on the members of the Council to adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

59. **Mr. Hassan** (Sudan) said that the various conflicts currently being witnessed in the world and the human rights violations that they engendered pointed to the dire need for peace. Building a culture of peace was an ongoing process that involved respecting diversity and encouraging dialogue between cultures and civilizations. It also entailed combating racism, terrorism, hatred and exclusion and building relations between countries based on mutual respect. The draft resolution reflected the clear link between a culture of peace and human rights. His delegation therefore supported it and called for its adoption without a vote.

60. **Mr. Quintanilla Román** (Cuba) said that collective calls for peace and the promotion of a culture of peace were more relevant than ever before. His delegation appreciated the added value of the draft resolution, which built on other efforts of the Council and the General Assembly to promote the right to peace. That was the mother of all human rights, as the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights had stated at the current session of the Council. His delegation would continue to advocate the implementation of the right to peace as a compulsory rule of international law. There was a need for capacity-building on the legal issues associated with the right to peace, including national implementation frameworks, the legal rights to be protected, duty bearers and the legal nature of that right. The right to peace involved not only the absence of conflict, but also the creation of the political, economic and social conditions necessary to prevent conflicts from emerging or intensifying. Taking into account the unwavering support of Cuba for peace and the enjoyment of all human rights, his delegation would join the consensus on the draft resolution and contribute to its implementation.

61. **Mr. Alimbayev** (Kazakhstan) said that the draft resolution was a new initiative aimed at enabling the Council to play a role in addressing the concept of peace and its interrelationship with human rights. In view of the rise of intolerance, discrimination and hatred, which undermined social harmony and threatened peace and stability in all parts of the world, it was essential to mainstream peaceful coexistence through human rights, gender equality and friendship among all people, including ethnic, national, religious and linguistic minorities and Indigenous Peoples. His delegation called on all members of the Council to adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

Statements made in explanation of position before the decision

62. **Ms. Taylor** (United States of America) said that development, human rights and peace were interconnected. Her delegation was pleased that the draft resolution advanced gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment, including their participation in the promotion of international peace and security. It also appreciated the recognition of the critical role that youth played in peace processes. It was disappointed, however, that all references to human rights defenders had been deleted from the text, as human rights defenders were crucial for fostering democratic participation and strengthening a culture of peace. With regard to references to the right to peace and the right to development, the United States position on the Declaration on the Right to Peace and the Declaration on the Right to Development was well known and had not changed. Further points of clarification on other issues, including educational matters, were provided in the general statement to be posted on the Permanent Mission's website at the conclusion of the Council's session.

63. **Mr. Honsei** (Japan) said that the draft resolution was a timely and valuable contribution to building a culture of peace, especially in the current climate of conflict and polarization. However, Japan considered that the right to peace was still not an internationally established human rights concept and that issues relating to international peace and security should be dealt with in other relevant forums of the United Nations. It also believed that the issue of finding a consensus on the legal connection between peace and human rights required further consideration. It was with those caveats that Japan had decided to join the consensus on the draft resolution.

64. *Draft resolution A/HRC/55/L.31 was adopted.*

Draft resolution A/HRC/55/L.33/Rev.1: Mandate of Independent Expert on the enjoyment of human rights by persons with albinism

65. **Mr. Kah** (Gambia), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the main sponsors, namely the States members of the Group of African States, said that, since the establishment of the mandate of Independent Expert on the enjoyment of human rights by persons with albinism, the holders of that mandate had highlighted the challenges faced by persons with albinism throughout the world. Those challenges included the impact of climate change, barriers to their rights to health, education, equality and dignity and the need to protect them from violence and discrimination. To continue the work in that area, it was crucial to renew the mandate of Independent Expert. The Group of African States hoped that members would support the adoption of the draft resolution by consensus.

66. **The President** said that 20 States had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution.

67. **Mr. Pesteen de Buystswerve** (Belgium), making a general statement on behalf of the States members of the European Union that were members of the Council, said that the draft resolution called for the protection of persons with albinism from discrimination and violence and encouraged States to take effective measures to enable such persons to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. The Independent Expert had done much to ensure that the human rights of persons with albinism were respected, protected and fulfilled by helping to overcome the widespread lack of understanding of albinism and the specific needs of individuals with that condition. The European Union fully supported the renewal of the mandate. His delegation therefore hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

68. *Draft resolution A/HRC/55/L.33/Rev.1 was adopted.*

The meeting was suspended at 11.10 a.m. and resumed at 11.20 a.m.

Agenda item 4: Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

([A/HRC/55/L.6](#) and [A/HRC/55/L.17](#) as orally revised)

Draft resolution A/HRC/55/L.6: Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran

69. **Mr. Gunnarsson** (Observer for Iceland), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the main sponsors, namely Germany, North Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova, the United Kingdom and his own delegation, said that the text, which was short and of a technical nature, had two clear objectives: to extend the mandate of Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran and to extend the mandate of the independent international fact-finding mission on the Islamic Republic of Iran. Considerations of best practice and efficiency had prompted the sponsors to combine the renewal of the two mandates in a single text. The draft resolution also included a decision to hold a single, joint interactive dialogue at the Council's fifty-eighth session. The two mandates were clearly distinct and complementary. The Special Rapporteur monitored and reported on human rights developments in the Islamic Republic of Iran, while the fact-finding mission had the temporary and narrowly defined task of investigating serious human rights violations committed in the context of the 2022 nationwide protest, with a focus on women and children. The fact-finding mission required one more year to finalize its work of verifying and consolidating the vast amount of information it had collected.

70. The human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran remained dire, with persistent violations of a wide range of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. Over 800 persons had been executed in 2023 alone, including persons who had been children at the time of the alleged offence, women, protesters and scores of persons convicted of offences that failed to meet the threshold of being among the most serious crimes under international law, often following grossly unfair trials. Women and girls deemed to wear the veil incorrectly in public and semi-public spaces, citizens showing solidarity with the "Women, Life, Freedom" movement and families of victims seeking truth and justice continued to face harassment. A custody and hijab bill currently in the final stage of adoption threatened to further aggravate the already draconian penalties for women and girls who defied mandatory veiling.

71. By adopting the draft resolution, the Council would express its rejection of discrimination and violence against women and girls, children, persons belonging to minorities, human rights defenders, lawyers and journalists. Renewing the two mandates would be a sign of solidarity with the Iranian people. His delegation called on all members to support the draft resolution and, if a vote was called, to vote in favour of it.

72. **The President** said that four States had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution.

General statements made before the voting

73. **Mr. Peesteen de Buystswerve** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the States members of the European Union that were members of the Council, said that the European Union was deeply concerned about the human rights situation in Iran, which had further deteriorated since the crackdown on the protests that had taken place in September 2022. The Special Rapporteur's mandate was therefore crucial for monitoring and reporting on the ongoing human rights violations to the Council. The European Union called on Iran to eliminate in law and in practice all forms of systematic discrimination against women and girls in public and private life. His delegation wished to emphasize the importance of the fact-finding mission and its unfinished work of consolidating and preserving evidence of reported human rights violations related to the protests. The human rights situation in Iran warranted an extension of the two mandates and the European Union called on Iran to cooperate fully with the mandate holders. For those reasons, the European Union supported the draft resolution and called on all member States to support it as well.

74. **Ms. Taylor** (United States of America) said that life in Iran was overshadowed by a regime that stifled freedom, curtailed rights and exacted merciless retribution on its own citizens. The words “women, life, freedom” continued to resonate as deeply as they had when the Council had first come together for a special session on 24 November 2022 to stand in solidarity with the Iranian people against the regime’s relentless oppression. The United States strongly supported the renewal of the mandates of the Special Rapporteur and the fact-finding mission. It commended the main sponsors for their unwavering commitment and their inclusive approach, which ensured that a multitude of voices were heard, echoing the universal calls for justice and accountability. It also welcomed the decision to enhance the efficiency of the Council’s work by combining two draft resolutions into one. The chilling accounts outlined in the reports of the fact-finding mission ([A/HRC/55/67](#)) and the Special Rapporteur ([A/HRC/55/62](#)) revealed a stark and worsening human rights landscape in Iran, with the continued violent crackdown since the death of Jina Mahsa Amini in 2022. According to the fact-finding mission, over 834 Iranians had been executed in 2023 alone. At least 28 death sentences had been handed down in relation to the protests themselves and nine protesters had been executed between December 2022 and January 2024.

75. The State’s campaign of terror against peaceful protesters was unconscionable, with reports that protesters had been blinded and shot and that women and girls, particularly those daring to protest, had faced sexual violence and abuse at the hands of security agencies. The regime sought to conceal those horrific acts by detaining or threatening activists and human rights defenders for their work and targeting protesters with online harassment and abuse in an effort to silence and intimidate them. Members of religious and ethnic minority groups, including but not limited to Kurds, Baluchis and Baha’is, had been denied the right to exercise their freedom of religion or belief and in recent weeks had been subjected to the desecration of holy sites, including burial grounds. Her delegation called on the Council to renew the mandates of the Special Rapporteur and the fact-finding mission and support the draft resolution.

76. **Ms. Fuentes Julio** (Chile) said that her delegation was deeply concerned about the conclusions of the reports of the international fact-finding mission and the Special Rapporteur concerning the violent crackdown on peaceful protests and widespread institutional discrimination against women and children that had resulted in serious human rights violations in Iran. Her delegation took note of the numerous documented allegations of violations of the right to life, liberty and security of person and the right not to be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, to rape or other forms of sexual violence or to arbitrary arrest or detention. Her delegation reiterated the calls by the international community for the Government of Iran to cooperate fully with the Special

Rapporteur and the fact-finding mission, and called on the Council members to support the draft resolution.

77. **Mr. Guillermet Fernández** (Costa Rica) said that his delegation welcomed the call for renewal of the two mandates in a single draft resolution, as it showed the Council's capacity to be more efficient. The human rights situation of women and girls in Iran was a matter of the utmost concern. The Council and the international community must not stand idly by as they witnessed the shocking number of persons who had been executed and the increasing trend towards recourse to the death penalty. Cooperation with United Nations mechanisms such as those addressed in the draft resolution should be seen as a sovereign decision by States that had undertaken the obligations implicit in their status as Members of the Organization. Such cooperation was being advocated not for its own sake, but because countries stood to gain by promoting and protecting human rights at the national level. His delegation reiterated its solidarity with the women and people of Iran and called on member States to adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

78. **Mr. Foradori** (Argentina) said that his delegation wished to express once again its concern about the reports of the Special Rapporteur and the fact-finding mission, which confirmed the significant deterioration of the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran, the existence of institutionalized discrimination against women and girls, the disproportionate use of force by the security forces, the continued arbitrary detention of protesters, human rights defenders, lawyers and even children, a significant increase in the number of people who had been executed and ongoing violations of the rights to freedom of expression and freedom of religion, among others. According to those reports, many of the grave human rights violations that had been committed amounted to crimes against humanity. Those violations must be investigated, the perpetrators brought to justice and the victims given adequate reparation. The mandates of the Special Rapporteur and the fact-finding mission were complementary and mutually reinforcing. Argentina would therefore vote in favour of the draft resolution and hoped that the other members of the Council would do likewise.

79. **The President** invited the State concerned by the draft resolution to make a statement.

80. **Mr. Bahreini** (Observer for the Islamic Republic of Iran) said that, a few days earlier, diplomatic premises of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Syria had been brutally bombed by Israel. On 18 March, Israel had conducted an overnight raid on Al-Shifa Hospital, adding to the previous 33,000 victims of its massacre of Palestinians, mainly women and children. On 1 April, its occupying forces had killed a number of aid workers who had been feeding people in Gaza. That had not been the first and would not be the last time that crimes against humanity had been perpetrated by the Israeli regime. The Council should hold the Israeli regime accountable for the human rights consequences of its ferity.

81. The Council had before it a highly politicized draft resolution that provided for two unwarranted mechanisms. What made the draft resolution all the more ridiculous and shameful was the fact that its sponsors, particularly the United States regime and Germany, were the core supporters of the Israeli terrorist regime and were emboldening it to perpetrate its inhuman acts in Palestine and in the region. The mandates extended by the draft resolution were unreasonable and did nothing to establish the truth. Rather, they were part of the cost that Iran was paying for its genuine defence of the cause of the Palestinian people. Iran was proud of supporting Palestine and would continue opposing occupation and oppression. Considering the political aspects of the issue, his delegation rejected the draft resolution in the strongest terms. Such initiatives would never succeed in silencing the voice of Iran, which was protecting and promoting the rights of its people in a responsible manner. The establishment of a national special committee by the Iranian President was a clear manifestation of the country's strong commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights. To avoid the further politicization of the Council, his delegation invited all responsible members who truly cared about its credibility to vote against the draft resolution.

Statements made in explanation of vote before the voting

82. **Mr. Quintanilla Román** (Cuba) said that Cuba wished to reiterate its principled position on selective and politicized resolutions that did not enjoy the support of the States

concerned. Such resolutions had clear geostrategic goals and singled out sovereign developing countries that did not bow to the dictates of international imperialism. The Council had ample evidence to show that constructive dialogue and cooperation were the only means by which to achieve concrete progress in the promotion and protection of human rights. The universal periodic review was based on equality and cooperation and was the appropriate mechanism for reviewing human rights in all countries. If the Council was genuinely interested in discussing human rights in Iran, it should begin by condemning the unilateral coercive measures imposed on that country and the recent attack on its consulate in the Syrian Arab Republic, which constituted a flagrant violation of international law. The draft resolution was interventionist and confrontational in nature and singled out a particular country, to the detriment of mutual understanding. For the reasons he had outlined, his delegation requested a vote on the draft resolution and would vote against it.

83. **Mr. Ghirmai** (Eritrea) said that his delegation commended the Islamic Republic of Iran on the efforts that it was making to meet the needs of its population and called for the lifting of the unilateral coercive measures imposed on the country, which were affecting the human rights of the Iranian people. The international community should engage with the Islamic Republic of Iran and support its efforts to promote and protect human rights while fully respecting its sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence. Naming and shaming countries was not an effective way to promote and protect human rights. The Council's work should be guided by the principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity. That ideal should not be abandoned in favour of narrow geopolitical interests. Eritrea opposed the politicization of human rights and the imposition of country-specific resolutions. Furthermore, it failed to see how the Council could justify mandating two parallel mechanisms to address alleged human rights violations in the same country. His delegation would vote against the draft resolution and called on other members of the Council to do likewise.

84. **Ms. Li Xiaomei** (China) said that China had always advocated constructive dialogue and cooperation based on equality and mutual respect. It opposed the use of human rights as a pretext to interfere in the internal affairs of States and the adoption of country-specific mechanisms that did not enjoy the support of the countries concerned. The draft resolution failed to respect the legitimate concerns of the Iranian authorities and ignored their strong opposition to the extension of the mandates of the Special Rapporteur and the fact-finding mission. The text failed to reflect the efforts made by Iran to promote and protect human rights and its strong political will to cooperate with human rights mechanisms. It ignored the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures, which were abused by certain countries to the detriment of the Iranian people. The draft resolution would not help to promote and protect human rights. Rather, it would undermine dialogue, exacerbate tensions and squander resources in the midst of the ongoing United Nations liquidity crisis. For those reasons, her delegation would vote against the draft resolution and called on other members of the Council to do likewise.

85. **The President** said that Finland had withdrawn its sponsorship of the draft resolution.

86. **Ms. Schroderus-Fox** (Finland) said that her delegation supported the draft resolution and the extension of the mandates of the Special Rapporteur and the fact-finding mission, as it was deeply concerned about the deteriorating human rights situation in Iran. The structural discrimination against women and girls was particularly alarming. It was essential to continue gathering information on the human rights situation in order to ensure accountability for violations of human rights. The mandates of the two mechanisms should be extended to ensure proper monitoring of the human rights situation and human rights violations, especially against women and children. For those reasons, Finland would vote in favour of the draft resolution and called on other members of the Council to do likewise.

87. **Mr. Da Silva Nunes** (Brazil) said that his Government recognized that Iran was engaging with human rights treaty bodies and OHCHR. His delegation encouraged the Iranian Government to collaborate with the special procedures of the Human Rights Council, particularly the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

88. Although progress had recently been made in some areas, such as women's and girls' access to education, Brazil remained deeply concerned about the continued use of the death penalty, including against children. The protection of the rights to peaceful assembly and association must be strengthened and further measures should be taken to ensure the right to freedom of expression and opinion both online and offline. There was also a need to repeal laws that discriminated on the basis of gender and to promote the right of women and girls to participate in political life on an equal footing with men. Greater protection should be afforded to human rights defenders. Reports of violations of the rights of women, human rights defenders and religious and ethnic minorities were troubling. The Baha'i and other religious minorities should be permitted to exercise their faith freely and peacefully, without any discrimination. On the understanding that Iran would step up its efforts to improve the human rights situation in the country, Brazil would, in a spirit of constructive dialogue, abstain from voting on the draft resolution. Brazil encouraged Iran to continue to enhance its engagement with international human rights mechanisms in a spirit of cooperation and openness.

89. **Mr. Bladéhane** (Algeria) said that human rights issues should be tackled at the international level and through a non-politicized, non-selective approach. His delegation had reservations about country-specific resolutions, which perpetuated confrontation instead of promoting constructive dialogue. Double standards were being applied within the Human Rights Council, which singled out some countries for criticism while failing to take credible measures to stop the ongoing genocide against the Palestinian people. It was troubling to note that geopolitical interests prevailed within the Council and superseded the interests of human rights. Algeria rejected the politicization of the Council and stressed its commitment to protecting and promoting human rights. For all those reasons, his delegation would vote against the draft resolution.

90. **The President** said that Lithuania had withdrawn its sponsorship of the draft resolution.

91. **Mr. Staniulis** (Lithuania) said that the reports submitted to the Council by the Special Rapporteur and the international fact-finding mission indicated that the rights of women, girls and members of ethnic and religious minorities continued to be violated in Iran. Particularly alarming was the use of repressive measures against peaceful protesters, including summary executions, in order to spread fear throughout society. The ongoing acts of violence committed by the security forces and public officials were the result of decades-long impunity for gross human rights violations. The perpetrators must be identified and brought to justice. In that connection, the work of the international fact-finding mission and the Special Rapporteur was essential. For those reasons, his delegation would vote in favour of the draft resolution and called on other members of the Council to do likewise.

92. **The President** said that France had withdrawn its sponsorship of the draft resolution.

93. **Mr. Bonnafont** (France) said that his Government remained deeply concerned about the human rights situation in Iran. It was not politicized to recall the violent and systematic repression against demonstrators in the country since 16 September 2022. It was not politicized to call on the Iranian authorities to put an end to the ongoing arbitrary detentions, violations of the right to a fair trial, unjustified prosecutions and degrading treatment directed at human rights defenders, journalists, foreign nationals and dual nationals and to eliminate discrimination against persons belonging to minorities. It was not politicized to call on Iran to guarantee freedom of opinion and expression, including on the Internet, as well as freedom of peaceful protest and freedom of religion or belief. It was not politicized to draw the international community's attention to the alarming rise in the number of death sentences and executions in Iran, where at least 834 people had been executed in 2023.

94. Iran continued to apply the death penalty to child offenders. Over the last 30 years, more than 70 per cent of the executions of children in the world had taken place in Iran. Drawing attention to those facts was not politicized; it was the duty of the Council. The work of the Special Rapporteur and the international fact-finding mission was essential to the fight against impunity in Iran. France supported the extension of their mandates and called on Iran to engage in dialogue by cooperating with those two mechanisms of the Council. His

delegation would vote in favour of the draft resolution and called on other members of the Council to do likewise.

95. **Mr. Habib** (Indonesia) said that Indonesia advocated the advancement of women's and girls' rights. It was deeply troubled by the tragic death of Jina Mahsa Amini in 2022 and by the subsequent protests, which had led to acts of violence and repression. Discrimination against women and girls around the world, including in Iran, demanded the attention of the whole international community. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) estimated that, in Gaza, the forces of the occupying Power had killed more than 9,000 women to date. That grim figure underscored the urgent need for international action to halt the violence affecting women in conflict zones.

96. His delegation had carefully studied the report of the fact-finding mission on Iran. The issues raised by the mission must be addressed in a constructive manner that promoted dialogue and progress. In that connection, it was clear that Iran could do much more to promote and protect human rights and engage with the international community. If meaningful progress was to be made, the country concerned must be allowed to follow up on the situation through its national mechanisms. Such an approach was essential if increasing politicization and selectivity were to be avoided.

97. The continued duplication of effort in Iran through the work of two mechanisms created redundancies that drained resources and detracted from the efficiency and effectiveness of the Council's work. Indonesia recognized that Iran was making efforts to tackle its human rights situation through established national mechanisms. Human rights should be promoted through dialogue and cooperation rather than confrontation. For that reason, Indonesia held regular bilateral dialogues on human rights with Iran to extend best practices and share insights. Given the commitment of Indonesia to those principles, it could not support the draft resolution.

98. **The President** said that the Kingdom of the Netherlands had withdrawn its sponsorship of the draft resolution.

99. **Mr. Bekkers** (Kingdom of the Netherlands) said that the Kingdom of the Netherlands stood in solidarity with the people of Iran. His delegation admired the courage of those Iranians who continued to stand up for human rights despite the crackdown and persecution by the authorities. As other delegations had pointed out, it was important not to politicize the Council's work and to focus on the facts. The findings of the fact-finding mission and the Special Rapporteur were deeply shocking in that they highlighted institutional discrimination against women, girls and members of religious and ethnic minorities and the serious human rights violations committed in the wake of Jina Mahsa Amini's death. According to the fact-finding mission, many of the violations, which included murder, enforced disappearance, torture and sexual violence, amounted to crimes against humanity. The victims of those violations deserved to see the perpetrators held to account. The draft resolution, which addressed the two mandates in a single text, was an appropriate means of promoting efficiency in the Council's work. As the human rights situation on the ground continued to deteriorate, it was essential to extend the mandates of the two mechanisms by one year. For that reason, his delegation would vote in favour of the draft resolution and called on other members of the Council to do likewise.

100. **Mr. Antwi** (Ghana) said that equal attention should be paid to economic, social and cultural rights and to civil and political rights. It was important to ensure respect for the entire spectrum of human rights in order to uphold the dignity of all persons and promote progress and stability in societies. Ghana had been following the national accountability measures taken by Iran, including the establishment of a body to investigate the aftermath of the 2022 protests and a commitment to cooperate with the universal periodic review mechanism. His delegation urged Iran to cooperate with the Council and UNHCR. It also called on the Iranian authorities to ensure full respect for the civil liberties and fundamental human rights of the Iranian people, in compliance with the country's international human rights obligations. Ghana intended to continue engaging constructively and dispassionately with the Council and the Third Committee of the General Assembly on the situation of human rights in Iran, and would thus abstain from voting on the draft resolution.

101. *At the request of the representative of Cuba, a recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Albania, Argentina, Belgium, Benin, Bulgaria, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Finland, France, Gambia, Germany, Honduras, Japan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Montenegro, Morocco, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Paraguay, Romania, Somalia, United States of America.

Against:

Algeria, Burundi, China, Cuba, Eritrea, Indonesia, Sudan, Viet Nam.

Abstaining:

Bangladesh, Brazil, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Georgia, Ghana, India, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Maldives, Qatar, South Africa, United Arab Emirates.

102. *Draft resolution A/HRC/55/L.6 was adopted by 24 votes to 8, with 15 abstentions.*

Draft resolution A/HRC/55/L.17, as orally revised: Situation of human rights in Myanmar

103. **Mr. Pecsteen de Buystswerve** (Belgium), introducing the draft resolution, as orally revised, on behalf of the main sponsors, namely the States members of the European Union, said that the text took account of the recent reports of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, which described a situation akin to a nightmare. The Myanmar military, desperately clinging to power, continued to inflict unbearable levels of suffering and cruelty on people in Myanmar. Intensified conflict, transnational crime and mandatory conscription were exacerbating the situation, while horrific and systematic human rights violations persisted. The military's hold over humanitarian assistance worsened the consequences of the crisis. Persons in vulnerable situations, including the Rohingya, continued to bear the brunt of the suffering. The safe, voluntary, dignified and sustainable return of all refugees and displaced persons remained impossible. The military's brutality and countless human rights violations could not go unpunished. The draft resolution was the Council's response to the High Commissioner's call for the international community to refocus its energy on preventing atrocities against all people in Myanmar, including the Rohingya, by taking meaningful, effective and targeted action to end the military's access to arms, jet fuel and foreign currency.

104. By adopting the draft resolution, the Council would remind the military of its commitments under the five-point consensus adopted by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and would express support for the Association's efforts in that regard. The Council should make it clear to the Myanmar military that the brutal attacks against civilians and medical and humanitarian workers must cease. The adoption of the draft resolution would send a strong signal of support to the people of Myanmar. The European Union therefore called on all members of the Council to support it.

105. **The President** said that six States had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution.

General statements made before the decision

106. **Ms. Haque** (Bangladesh) said that, in August 2017, Bangladesh had opened its borders to the Rohingya, who were fleeing from violence and atrocity crimes in Myanmar. Seven years later, none of those people had been able to return to their ancestral land. The prolonged uncertainty over the prospect of repatriation was fuelling outbreaks of crime and violence among the Rohingya community. Some members of that community were at risk of becoming radicalized and turning to violent extremism, which had the potential to undermine regional stability.

107. The draft resolution included an expression of deep concern at the cross-border effect of the actions of the Myanmar military, which had caused deaths and damage to property in Bangladesh. Given the gradual fall in the provision of humanitarian assistance and food for Rohingya temporarily sheltered in Bangladesh, her delegation endorsed the call for adequate funding of the Joint Response Plan for the Rohingya humanitarian crisis. While the international community's current focus was on the restoration of democracy in Myanmar, it should also recognize the concerns of Bangladesh and the need to enable the Rohingya to

return to Myanmar, as local integration in Bangladesh was not an option. For those reasons, Bangladesh strongly endorsed the call for Myanmar to address the root causes of the crisis by fully implementing all the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State and facilitating the return of forcibly displaced Rohingya. Her delegation hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

108. **Mr. Foradori** (Argentina) said that Argentina was deeply concerned about the ongoing breakdown of the institutional and democratic order in Myanmar and its adverse impact on human rights. The escalation of violence noted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar demanded the Council's attention. Some 2.7 million persons had been displaced and more than 18 million, including 6 million children, were in need of humanitarian assistance. A campaign of forced military recruitment had been initiated, civilians were being attacked and arbitrarily arrested and restrictions were being placed on access to information and freedom of expression. The draft resolution included a call for the Myanmar military leadership to release all arbitrarily detained prisoners, to fully respect international human rights law, to refrain from the excessive use of force and to cooperate constructively with the human rights protection mechanisms established by the Council. His delegation did not subscribe to the argument that the Council could not take action to investigate human rights violations if the country concerned was not in agreement; that would amount to complicity in such violations. Argentina welcomed the draft resolution and urged the international community not to remain indifferent to the tragedy being visited on the people of Myanmar.

109. **Ms. Li Xiaomei** (China), speaking in explanation of position before the decision, said that China had been closely following the situation in Myanmar and was playing a constructive role in promoting peace and stability in the country. Any action taken by the Council on Myanmar should be geared towards bridging the differences between all the parties in Myanmar and achieving a political settlement that would lead to peace, stability and development. China had participated in the consultations on the draft resolution and had made constructive suggestions, some of which had been taken on board by the main sponsors. However, the draft resolution still contained controversial elements and failed to reflect the efforts made by the Government of Myanmar to promote and protect human rights. Furthermore, some elements of the draft resolution lacked a credible factual basis. For those reasons, and in line with its consistent position on country-specific human rights issues, her delegation dissociated itself from the consensus on the draft resolution.

110. *Draft resolution A/HRC/55/L.17, as orally revised, was adopted.*

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.