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Sweden

Compilation of information prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

I. Background

1. The present report was prepared pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1 and 16/21, taking into consideration the outcome of the previous review.¹ It is a compilation of information contained in relevant United Nations documents, presented in a summarized manner owing to word-limit constraints.

II. Scope of international obligations and cooperation with human rights mechanisms

2. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that Sweden ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.²

3. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that Sweden ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.³

4. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that Sweden withdraw its declaration on article 2 (c) of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.⁴ It also recommended that Sweden accede to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure.⁵

5. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence and the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief recommended that Sweden ratify the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169), of the International Labour Organization (ILO).⁶

6. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that Sweden ratify the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190).⁷

7. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recommended that Sweden review its position on the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.⁸



8. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) recommended that Sweden withdraw its remaining reservations to the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons.⁹

9. The Special Rapporteur on truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence conducted an official visit to Sweden in March 2024.¹⁰ The Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion visited Sweden in October 2023.¹¹ The International Independent Expert Mechanism to Advance Racial Justice and Equality in Law Enforcement visited Sweden from 31 October to 4 November 2022.¹²

10. The Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion recalled that, under the Human Rights 75 initiative, Sweden had pledged to continue strengthening initiatives to combat racism and to promote freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief.¹³

11. Sweden had contributed financially to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights from 2020 to 2024.¹⁴

III. National human rights framework

1. Constitutional and legislative framework

12. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recommended that Sweden fully incorporate the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities into domestic law, systematically review existing laws, policies and regulations to ascertain the legislative action required to conform with the obligations under the Convention and ensure that its judicial and administrative bodies effectively applied the rights enshrined in the Convention in individual cases.¹⁵

13. The Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion recommended that Sweden incorporate the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights into domestic law and review domestic legislation to ensure full compliance by all entities.¹⁶

14. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recommended that Sweden take the measures necessary to give full effect to economic, social and cultural rights, as enshrined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in its domestic legislation and to ensure their justiciability.¹⁷

2. Institutional infrastructure and policy measures

15. Several human rights mechanisms welcomed the adoption of the law providing for the creation of the Swedish Institute for Human Rights.¹⁸ The Committee against Torture recommended that Sweden periodically review the relevant legislation governing the Institute to continuously strengthen its mandate and independence.¹⁹ The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion recommended that Sweden ensure that the Institute was able to exercise its mandate in accordance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles).²⁰

16. The Committee against Torture welcomed the broadening of the mandate of the Equality Ombudsman to combat discrimination and to work for equal rights and opportunities.²¹

17. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that Sweden strengthen the monitoring role of the Swedish Gender Equality Agency and provide it with sufficient human, technical and financial resources to effectively carry out its mandate.²²

18. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that Sweden ensure that the Ombudsman for Children had the mandate to receive, investigate and competently address complaints from children in a child-friendly manner and that Sweden simplify procedures for filing a complaint under existing mechanisms and ensure that all children were aware of their right to file a complaint.²³

19. The same Committee recommended that Sweden establish or designate a body at the national level responsible for ensuring the effective coordination of the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child at the central, regional and municipal levels and across various sectors.²⁴

20. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed the concern that the Discrimination Act did not comprehensively address intersecting forms of discrimination against women. They recommended that Sweden amend the Discrimination Act to cover all internationally recognized prohibited grounds of discrimination.²⁵

IV. Promotion and protection of human rights

A. Implementation of international human rights obligations, taking into account applicable international humanitarian law

1. Equality and non-discrimination

21. The Committee against Torture highlighted that Sweden should continue its efforts to prevent and prosecute criminal acts motivated by discrimination, intolerance, hatred or negative stereotype by ensuring effective investigation, prosecution and punishment of perpetrators.²⁶ The International Independent Expert Mechanism was heartened to learn about the appointment of prosecutors specializing in hate crimes and invited Sweden to continue preventing and prosecuting hate crimes and all offences motivated by discrimination, intolerance or hatred.²⁷ The Special Rapporteur on truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights made similar remarks.²⁸ The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recommended ensuring that effective judicial remedies and accessible legal aid were available to victims of harassment, hate crimes and discrimination on the grounds of disability, race, ethnicity and religion.²⁹ It also recommended improving the capacity of relevant authorities with respect to preventing, monitoring and addressing discrimination, harassment and hate speech in educational settings.³⁰ The Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion recommended establishing independent and specialized institutions that met international standards for carrying out work to counter hate speech.³¹

22. The International Independent Expert Mechanism highlighted reports of racial profiling by law enforcement and overpolicing in racially segregated neighbourhoods.³² The Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion recommended that Sweden acknowledge and spotlight the extent of Islamophobia, antisemitism and other such discrimination in Sweden.³³ The International Independent Expert Mechanism recommended amending the Anti-Discrimination Act so that it applied fully to the conduct of State agents, and amending the Police Act of 1984 and the Government Decree on Use of Firearms in the Police Service of 1969 to align them with the most recent international standards governing the use of force.³⁴

23. The Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed concern about the persistent discrimination against children in disadvantaged situations and about regional disparities in access to several human rights. It recommended that Sweden implement targeted policies and programmes to combat racist and xenophobic activities among children and to eliminate discrimination against children in disadvantaged situations, and address disparities between municipalities. It also recommended simplifying the provision of child-friendly complaint procedures and ensuring that children knew how to report cases of discrimination and that reports were investigated by a competent authority.³⁵

24. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed concern about discrimination based on ethnicity and disability in access to housing. It recommended that Sweden clearly define responsibilities and strengthen the coordination of all local, municipal and national authorities with respect to housing, homelessness and housing management strategies.³⁶

2. Right to life, liberty and security of person, and freedom from torture

25. The Committee against Torture remained concerned that the crime of torture had still not been incorporated into domestic legislation. It recommended that Sweden promptly define and criminalize torture in domestic law.³⁷

26. The same Committee recommended that Sweden ensure that all persons deprived of their liberty were afforded, both in law and in practice, all fundamental legal safeguards from the very outset of deprivation of liberty, in particular the right to access to a lawyer, the right to a medical examination by an independent doctor and the right to notify a relative.³⁸

27. The same Committee noted with concern that pretrial detention was still frequently used in Sweden. It recommended that Sweden consider alternative measures to reduce the use of pretrial detention, and ensure that all decisions imposing such detention were based on objective criteria and supporting facts.³⁹ The International Independent Expert Mechanism expressed concern about the excessive restrictions imposed by prosecutors and courts on detainees in pretrial detention. It called on Sweden to ensure that restrictions on remand prisoners were imposed only in exceptional circumstances, as a last resort and based on concrete individual grounds.⁴⁰

28. The Committee against Torture expressed concern that solitary confinement remained in frequent use. It recommended that Sweden abolish the use of solitary confinement for minors, carry out thorough investigations of incidents of suicide or suicide attempts, and ascertain whether there was a link between the use of measures of physical restraint or solitary confinement and incidents of suicide or suicide attempts in places of detention.⁴¹ The International Independent Expert Mechanism recommended that Sweden fully outlaw the use of solitary confinement for children.⁴²

29. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities expressed concern about the prevalent use of coercion and restrictive practices and the application of electroconvulsive therapy and medical treatments without consent in group homes, special housing environments and all forms of institutions for children and adults with disabilities. It recommended that Sweden prohibit such practices and establish alternative non-coercive and age-appropriate support measures.⁴³

30. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recommended that Sweden strengthen existing oversight mechanisms to ensure regular inspections of places of detention, social care institutions, group homes and privately managed facilities, ensure regular public reporting to the parliament and establish mechanisms to facilitate prompt implementation of recommendations.⁴⁴

3. Administration of justice, including impunity, and the rule of law

31. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that Sweden maintain the minimum age of criminal responsibility at 15 years of age, provide specialized children's judges and prosecutors who had completed appropriate training on child justice principles and procedures, develop a strategy for the prevention of child offending based on research and analysis of the root causes of children's involvement in crime, actively promote non-judicial measures for children accused of criminal offences, and broaden the conditions under which a public defence counsel could be appointed for children facing criminal charges.⁴⁵

32. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities expressed concern about barriers to access to justice for persons with disabilities. It recommended that Sweden develop a national disability justice strategy that included appropriate training for those in the justice system on the application of the standards and principles under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and review the Legal Aid Act to remove financial barriers to legal representation.⁴⁶

33. The Special Rapporteur on truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence recommended that Sweden provide free legal aid to the Sami people and to the Tornedalians, Kvens and Lantalaïset to enforce their rights before the courts and ensure that the burden of proof of such rights did not unjustifiably fall on them.⁴⁷

34. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities expressed concern that persons with disabilities could be deprived of their liberty based on impairment and at the indeterminate detention of persons with disabilities who were deemed “unfit” to stand trial. It recommended that Sweden repeal all laws and abolish practices that allowed for the deprivation of liberty based on impairment and amend and/or repeal legislation that restricted the legal capacity of persons with disabilities and that allowed for harsher measures against them.⁴⁸

4. Fundamental freedoms and the right to participate in public and political life

35. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women expressed concern about the low number of women in leadership positions, in particular in academia, in senior management positions and on the boards of private companies. It recommended that Sweden make use of special temporary measures and provide incentives to significantly increase the number of women who were chief executive officers and members of boards of directors and who held senior management positions.⁴⁹ It also recommended that Sweden strengthen measures to prevent harassment of and threats against women politicians and candidates.⁵⁰ The Committee on the Rights of the Child made a similar recommendation about children’s participation in decision-making⁵¹ and the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities about persons with disabilities.⁵²

36. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) highlighted that “gross defamation” and gross “insulting behaviour” were criminal offences under chapter 5 of the Swedish Criminal Code. It encouraged Sweden to decriminalize defamation and place it within civil defamation legislation that was in accordance with international standards.⁵³

37. UNESCO stressed that the 2023 foreign espionage law had criminalized the disclosure of secret information in the context of international cooperation that could harm the State’s relationships as foreign espionage. Constitutional amendments to the Freedom of the Press Act and the Fundamental Law on Freedom of Expression had also been introduced to incorporate the disclosure of secret information in the context of international cooperation. UNESCO encouraged Sweden to revise existing legislation, paying particular attention to undefined and overly broad terminology that might restrict the exercise of freedom of expression in ways that were incompatible with international human rights law.⁵⁴

5. Right to privacy

38. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that Sweden strengthen regulations and safeguarding policies to protect the rights and safety of children in the digital environment and ensure that laws on access to information in the digital environment protected children from harmful content.⁵⁵ The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recommended that Sweden ensure data protection and the right to privacy and establish data protection protocols and secure systems to guarantee the privacy of persons with disabilities.⁵⁶

6. Right to marriage and family life

39. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women noted the adoption, in 2018, of an amendment to the law on certain international marriage and guardianship relations, which denied recognition in Sweden of child marriages concluded abroad on or after 1 January 2019. It recommended that Sweden conduct an assessment of the indirect consequences that the 2018 amendment to the law on certain international marriage and guardianship relations might have on women and girls and that could cause their situation to deteriorate further.⁵⁷

40. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities expressed concern about the lack of resources and adequate support mechanisms from the municipal authorities to support parents with disabilities and families with children with disabilities. It recommended that Sweden ensure the realization of the right to family life, the provision of support to parents with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities and the eradication of prejudices among the service providers and municipal authorities.⁵⁸

7. Prohibition of all forms of slavery, including trafficking in persons

41. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women expressed concern about reports of women and girls being trafficked for purposes of sexual exploitation, forced labour or forced criminal activities, and about the low number of investigations and prosecutions of reported cases of trafficking. It recommended that Sweden address the root causes of trafficking by enhancing educational and economic opportunities for women and girls and raise awareness about the risks of trafficking.⁵⁹ The Committee against Torture indicated that Sweden should enhance its efforts to combat trafficking in persons by prosecuting and punishing perpetrators, providing adequate protection and redress to the victims and preventing the return of trafficked persons to their countries of origin where there was substantial ground to believe that they would be in danger of torture or ill-treatment.⁶⁰

8. Right to work and to just and favourable conditions of work

42. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed the concern that persons with a migrant background continued to be disproportionately affected by discrimination in the labour market. It recommended that Sweden: (a) strengthen measures to ensure job security and adequate protection with respect to working conditions for all workers; (b) take appropriate legislative and administrative measures to combat all forms of labour exploitation; and (c) take concrete measures to monitor working conditions in sectors with an increased risk of labour exploitation and to provide effective remedial mechanisms for complaints.⁶¹

43. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women expressed concern about the gender wage gap. It recommended that Sweden strictly enforce the principle of equal pay for work of equal value in order to close the gender pay gap, strengthen measures to eliminate occupational segregation, enhance women's access to formal employment and prioritize the transition of women from part-time to full-time work.⁶²

44. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities expressed concern about the high incidence of unemployment among persons with disabilities. It recommended that Sweden review the existing national legislation to address systemic, intersectional and structural barriers experienced by persons with disabilities, take measures to increase the number of persons with disabilities in the open labour market and review the assessment of reduced capacity to work. It also recommended enforcing the implementation of the quotas of employment for persons with disabilities in both the public and the private sectors.⁶³

9. Right to social security

45. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights noted that workers in casual forms of employment faced barriers to accessing social security benefits. It recommended that Sweden adopt effective measures to reduce in-work poverty, address the high number of unemployed people at risk of poverty, and review and remove any existing barriers to the take-up of social security benefits or assistance.⁶⁴

10. Right to an adequate standard of living

46. The same Committee expressed concern about reports of rising poverty, in particular among residents of foreign descent. It recommended that Sweden adopt an official measurement of poverty that incorporated multidimensional aspects of poverty and adopt targeted measures to address increases in poverty.⁶⁵

47. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that Sweden further strengthen its policies to ensure that all children had an adequate standard of living, including by developing measures to prevent homelessness and expeditiously providing adequate and long-term social housing and other support measures for families in need, and ensure that all municipalities had child-friendly temporary or emergency accommodation available for children in need.⁶⁶

48. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed concern that the daily allowance for asylum-seekers had remained unchanged since 1994. It recommended

that Sweden ensure that social security benefits, including the basic unemployment benefit and the daily allowance for asylum-seekers, were indexed to the cost of living.⁶⁷

11. Right to health

49. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that Sweden strengthen mental health services for children, invest in preventive measures, address the underlying causes of suicide and poor mental health among children and provide community-based education and support for parents of children with mental health issues.⁶⁸ It recommended that Sweden strengthen its efforts to prevent suicide among children and establish inter-agency child death review teams to strengthen preventive measures.⁶⁹ The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities made similar remarks regarding persons with disabilities.⁷⁰

12. Right to education

50. The Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed concern about disparities in access to quality education and about discrimination, harassment and bullying in schools. It recommended that Sweden ensure the equal access of children from disadvantaged groups to quality education, reduce and prevent school dropout and absenteeism, and strengthen measures for ensuring inclusive education in mainstream schools for all children with disabilities. It also recommended combating violence in schools through prevention and early-detection mechanisms, intervention protocols, mandatory training for teachers, the empowerment of children and awareness-raising on the harmful effects of bullying and violence.⁷¹ The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recommended clarifying and enhancing the accessibility of recourse mechanisms available for students and parents, and raising awareness of the justiciability of the right to education and the right to access effective remedies.⁷²

51. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women expressed concern about the persistent gender segregation in the education sector and about reports of sexual harassment in schools. It recommended that Sweden continue to encourage women and girls to choose non-traditional fields of study and career paths, consider introducing temporary special measures to ensure the equal representation of women in senior academic posts, and ensure that a zero-tolerance policy on gender-based violence and harassment was effectively implemented in all schools.⁷³ The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recommended developing a national inclusive education strategy to transition from segregated education to inclusive education and establishing a mechanism to monitor and enforce the implementation of national legislation on inclusive education.⁷⁴

13. Development, the environment, and business and human rights

52. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed concern at potential limitations of the legal framework of Sweden with respect to holding businesses accountable for human rights abuses abroad and guaranteeing effective remedies for victims of human rights violations. It recommended that Sweden actively engage in discussions on and commit to multilateral negotiations and agreements while advocating for provisions that aligned with international human rights standards, including the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and that it establish clear, transparent and enforceable standards to ensure that State-owned businesses adhered to the required standards of “exemplary conduct”, while conducting regular monitoring.⁷⁵

53. The same Committee expressed the concern that Sweden had yet to adopt adequate measures to address or mitigate the potential adverse effects of large renewable energy and mining projects on the traditional lifestyle of the Sami people. It recommended that Sweden ensure the meaningful and informed participation of communities, including the Sami people, in the adoption of measures under the Climate Change Policy Action Plan.⁷⁶

54. The Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed concern about the lack of legal accountability for business enterprises that had violated children’s rights. It recommended that Sweden establish a clear regulatory framework for business enterprises and their subsidiaries operating in or managed from Swedish territory, establish monitoring

mechanisms for the investigation and redress of violations by them, and require companies to undertake assessments of, and consultations on, and fully disclose the environmental, health-related and other child rights impacts of their business activities.⁷⁷

B. Rights of specific persons or groups

1. Women

55. The Committee against Torture noted the reported increase in the numbers of domestic abuse crimes and sexual offences, and the low prosecution and conviction rates that had been recorded in those cases.⁷⁸ The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that Sweden strengthen and fully implement the current strategy in place to combat gender-based violence, ensure the availability of specialized, inclusive and accessible shelters for women and girls who were victims of gender-based violence, strictly apply the law on sexual offences and other relevant legislation to ensure that all sexual violence cases were investigated and that those responsible were prosecuted and adequately punished, and specifically criminalize femicide.⁷⁹

2. Children

56. The Committee against Torture expressed concern at the reported exposure of some young people in residential care to violence by staff, including reports that children could be restrained for long periods of time. It recommended that Sweden use restraints and solitary confinement as measures of last resort, for the shortest possible time and under strict medical supervision.⁸⁰ The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended taking legislative measures to explicitly prohibit the use of solitary confinement, isolation and restraint in alternative care settings, and ensuring that children had access to confidential, child-friendly and independent complaint mechanisms for reporting cases.⁸¹

57. UNESCO indicated that, although the Education Act (2010) and the Act Prohibiting Discrimination and Other Degrading Treatment of Children and School Students protected children from abusive and degrading treatment from staff members in educational institutions, no legal provision had been identified that explicitly protected them from corporal punishment or offered protection from all forms of violence. It encouraged Sweden to legally proscribe corporal punishment in educational settings.⁸²

58. The Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed concern about the high level of violence against children, the low rates of reporting, prosecution and conviction and the light penalties for perpetrators of child sexual exploitation and abuse. It also expressed concern about the lack of a legislative framework for ensuring multisectoral coordination and quality standards for comprehensive support services for victims of violence and the insufficient capacities of professionals working with and for children to recognize and address cases of violence against children. It urged Sweden to ensure that children had access to confidential and child-friendly complaint mechanisms for the reporting of all forms of violence and abuse and to ensure the effective investigation of all cases of violence against children and that perpetrators were prosecuted and punished with penalties commensurate with the gravity of their acts.⁸³ It recommended ensuring that amendments to the Social Services Act (2001) contained provisions for children under 15 years of age who experienced abuse or neglect to seek support from social services without parental consent.⁸⁴ It also recommended that Sweden criminalize all forms of the sale and sexual exploitation of children.⁸⁵

59. The same Committee recommended that Sweden strengthen measures aimed at eliminating child marriage and preventing female genital mutilation and further strengthen reporting of such cases and other harmful practices and ensure that perpetrators were brought to justice.⁸⁶ The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women expressed concern about women and girls who were abducted in the name of so-called honour. It recommended that Sweden ensure that cases of child and/or forced marriage were investigated effectively, that perpetrators were prosecuted and adequately punished and that women and girls in such unions had access to protection.⁸⁷

60. The Committee on the Rights of the Child noted with concern that the national strategy to strengthen children's rights had not been updated since 2009. It recommended that Sweden update the strategy and develop an action plan for its effective implementation that addressed disparities between municipalities and regions.⁸⁸

61. The same Committee noted with concern the lack of a child rights approach in the Parental Code (1998). It recommended that Sweden revise the legislation to ensure sufficient guarantees for the child's perspective to be considered in cases of parental disputes and consider the provision of separate representation for children.⁸⁹

62. The same Committee recommended that Sweden ensure that children deprived of a family environment could express their views and be heard in alternative care placement decisions, strengthen the rule of law in all operations of the National Board of Institutional Care, ensure that foster care was available and strengthen the foster care system, and strengthen measures aimed at providing education, skills and opportunities for social reintegration and independent living for children leaving alternative care.⁹⁰

3. Persons with disabilities

63. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities expressed concern about a gradual return to the medical model of disability in many areas of the law and that the definition of disability in section 5 (4) of the Discrimination Act was focused solely on the impairments, not the societal barriers, resulting in disabilities. It recommended that Sweden harmonize the definition of disability in laws and policies with the human rights model of disability and revise the definition of disability in the Discrimination Act.⁹¹

64. The same Committee recommended that Sweden eliminate all forms of substitute decision-making and replace them with a system of supported decision-making, and develop a national comprehensive strategy for the implementation of supported decision-making mechanisms with appropriate and proportionate safeguards across all levels of national, regional and municipal governments.⁹²

65. The same Committee recommended that Sweden establish institutionalized mechanisms for close consultation with and the active involvement of persons with disabilities in the processes for the development of accessibility standards and complaint mechanisms for persons with disabilities and their representative organizations to lodge complaints of violations of their right to accessibility.⁹³

66. The same Committee expressed concern that Swedish legislation did not define the denial of reasonable accommodation as a form of discrimination and the Discrimination Act did not contain any explicit provisions on intersectional and multiple forms of discrimination. It recommended that Sweden review the Discrimination Act to provide for explicit protection from multiple and intersectional forms of discrimination and amend it to rescind the restrictions on the prohibition of inadequate accessibility and to include an express guarantee of reasonable accommodation.⁹⁴

4. Indigenous Peoples and minorities

67. The Special Rapporteur on truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence highlighted the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Tornedalians, Kvens and Lantalaïset in 2020 and the Truth Commission for the Sami People in 2021. He expressed concern about the reportedly deficient implementation of the recommendations of the first commission and the lack of a framework to follow up on the work of both commissions.⁹⁵ He recommended that Sweden design and implement an independent mechanism to monitor the implementation of the recommendations of the two commissions, and ensure that the reports of both commissions were published, widely disseminated and utilized by all relevant public entities.⁹⁶

68. The same Special Rapporteur commended the reconciliation process initiated by the Church of Sweden. He recommended that Sweden design and implement a comprehensive reparation programme addressed to the Sami people and to Tornedalians, Kvens and Lantalaïset that included measures of rehabilitation, compensation and satisfaction (including public apologies) and transformative reparation.⁹⁷

69. The same Special Rapporteur underlined that the Act on Consultation on Issues Concerning the Sami People established the duty of the Government, the State authorities, the regions and the municipalities to consult Sami representatives before adopting decisions that might affect them.⁹⁸ The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recommended that Sweden ensure the effective implementation of that Act and guarantee, both in law and in practice, the free, prior and informed consent of the Sami in all decisions affecting them.⁹⁹

70. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women expressed concern regarding the lack of legislation to protect the rights of Sami Indigenous women and girls to their traditional lands. It recommended that Sweden revise its legislation, including the Minerals Act, to ensure that exploration permits were granted in consultation with the Sami Parliament, and adopt legislation requiring the free, prior and informed consent of and consultations and benefit-sharing with Indigenous women and girls.¹⁰⁰

5. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons

71. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities expressed concern about the unnecessary, invasive or irreversible medical interventions that modified the sex characteristics of intersex children. It recommended that Sweden ensure comprehensive protection for intersex children from those interventions.¹⁰¹

6. Migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers

72. UNHCR highlighted the recent introduction of a series of restrictive measures in the area of asylum and family reunification, initially in response to the significant increase in the number of asylum-seekers arriving in Sweden in 2015. While the measures had been intended to be temporary, they had been permanently incorporated into Swedish asylum policy. After the adoption of the Tidö Agreement, the Government had implemented stricter requirements for family reunification and had announced plans for further restrictions.¹⁰² UNHCR recommended that Sweden remove legal, practical and financial obstacles to ensure the earliest possible reunification of families.¹⁰³ The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed similar concerns.¹⁰⁴

73. UNHCR reported on the shift in the asylum law from permanent to temporary residence permits for people in need of international protection and the intention of the Government to remove fully the possibility of permanent residence permits for beneficiaries of international protection. UNHCR recommended that Sweden provide beneficiaries of international protection with a secure and stable residence status to facilitate their early and effective integration, and grant residence permits of the same length to refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection.¹⁰⁵

74. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed concern about a proposal to introduce an obligation for municipalities and public authorities to report any migrant suspected of being in an irregular situation to the immigration authorities. It recommended that Sweden ensure that any immigration policy did not impede the equal access of migrants to services essential for the realization of economic, social and cultural rights.¹⁰⁶

75. The Committee against Torture, while welcoming certain safeguards included in the Aliens Act, recommended that Sweden ensure that the detention of asylum-seekers was used only as a last resort.¹⁰⁷ UNHCR highlighted that, under the Aliens Act, children could be detained. It recommended that Sweden amend the Aliens Act to prohibit the detention of children for immigration-related purposes, irrespective of their status or that of their parents, and consider the application of alternative measures to detention.¹⁰⁸

76. Regarding non-refoulement, the Committee against Torture recommended that Sweden guarantee that all foreign nationals at risk of deportation had access to fair procedures to assess the risk that they might be subjected to torture and ill-treatment in their country of origin. It also recommended ensuring that all foreign nationals at risk of deportation could seek an independent and effective individual review of the deportation decision.¹⁰⁹

77. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed concern about the limitation of subsidized healthcare services for adult asylum-seekers to services that could “not wait”. It recommended that Sweden clearly define the term “healthcare that cannot wait” and take the measures necessary to guarantee the right to health of adult asylum-seekers.¹¹⁰

78. UNHCR recommended that Sweden continue to invest in quality assurance in relation to claims based on sexual orientation, gender identity and religious conversion, and ensure the use of updated country of origin information in cases of religious conversion to ensure that individuals who were objectively at risk of persecution were entitled to international protection.¹¹¹

7. Stateless persons

79. UNHCR highlighted that Sweden lacked a dedicated statelessness determination procedure, which resulted in inconsistent outcomes in registering stateless persons and contributed to the high number of persons being registered as having “unknown” nationality. UNHCR recommended that Sweden incorporate the definition of a stateless person pursuant to article 1 of the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons in all relevant legislation, establish a dedicated statelessness determination procedure, review the application of the burden and standard of proof, and use the “unknown” nationality category with caution.¹¹² The Committee on the Rights of the Child made similar remarks.¹¹³

80. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women noted with concern the number of stateless persons living in Sweden and that children who were born stateless in Sweden must apply for citizenship before reaching adulthood. It recommended that Sweden adopt legislative and policy measures for the reunification of families and ensure that mothers of stateless children had equal access to health, legal and social services.¹¹⁴

Notes

- ¹ A/HRC/44/12, A/HRC/44/12/Add.1 and A/HRC/45/2.
- ² CEDAW/C/SWE/CO/10, para. 50; E/C.12/SWE/CO/7, para. 42; and CRC/C/SWE/CO/6-7, para. 49.
- ³ CEDAW/C/SWE/CO/10, para. 50; and CRC/C/SWE/CO/6-7, para. 49.
- ⁴ CRC/C/SWE/CO/6-7, para. 46 (e).
- ⁵ Ibid., para. 48.
- ⁶ CEDAW/C/SWE/CO/10, para. 44 (d); A/HRC/57/50/Add.3, para. 60 (a); and A/HRC/55/47/Add.2, para. 98 (p).
- ⁷ CEDAW/C/SWE/CO/10, para. 34 (e).
- ⁸ E/C.12/SWE/CO/7, para. 5 (d).
- ⁹ UNHCR submission for the universal periodic review of Sweden, p. 3.
- ¹⁰ A/HRC/57/50/Add.3, para. 33.
- ¹¹ A/HRC/55/47/Add.2, p. 1.
- ¹² A/HRC/54/69, para. 4.
- ¹³ A/HRC/55/47/Add.2, para. 41.
- ¹⁴ See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/about-us/funding-and-budget/our-donors>.
- ¹⁵ CRPD/C/SWE/CO/2-3, paras. 7 and 8.
- ¹⁶ A/HRC/55/47/Add.2, paras. 13 and 98 (a).
- ¹⁷ E/C.12/SWE/CO/7, para. 5 (a).
- ¹⁸ CAT/C/SWE/CO/8, paras. 4 (b) and 6; CEDAW/C/SWE/CO/10, para. 17; E/C.12/SWE/CO/7, paras. 6 and 7; CRC/C/SWE/CO/6-7, para. 11; CRPD/C/SWE/CO/2-3, para. 69; A/HRC/55/47/Add.2, para. 21; and conference room paper of the International Independent Expert Mechanism to Advance Racial Justice and Equality in Law Enforcement on its visit to Sweden, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/country-reports/ahrc54crp1-international-independentexpert-mechanism-advance-racial>, para. 25.
- ¹⁹ CAT/C/SWE/CO/8, para. 7.
- ²⁰ E/C.12/SWE/CO/7, para. 7; CEDAW/C/SWE/CO/10, para. 18; CRPD/C/SWE/CO/2-3, para. 70; and A/HRC/55/47/Add.2, para. 98 (q).
- ²¹ CAT/C/SWE/CO/8, para. 4 (f).
- ²² CEDAW/C/SWE/CO/10, paras. 15 and 16.
- ²³ CRC/C/SWE/CO/6-7, paras. 11 and 12. See also A/HRC/55/47/Add.2, para. 24.
- ²⁴ CRC/C/SWE/CO/6-7, para. 8 (a).

- ²⁵ CEDAW/C/SWE/CO/10, paras. 13 and 14; and E/C.12/SWE/CO/7, paras. 20 and 21. See also A/HRC/55/47/Add.2, para. 98 (h); CRC/C/SWE/CO/6-7, paras. 16 and 17; and A/HRC/54/69, para. 5.
- ²⁶ CAT/C/SWE/CO/8, para. 33. See also CRPD/C/SWE/CO/2-3, paras. 13 and 14; A/HRC/57/50/Add.3, para. 49; A/HRC/55/47/Add.2, para. 98 (e); and A/HRC/54/69, para. 5.
- ²⁷ Conference room paper of the International Independent Expert Mechanism to Advance Racial Justice and Equality in Law Enforcement on its visit to Sweden, paras. 41 and 56.
- ²⁸ A/HRC/57/50/Add.3, para. 60 (l); and E/C.12/SWE/CO/7, paras. 20 and 21.
- ²⁹ E/C.12/SWE/CO/7, para. 21. See also A/HRC/55/47/Add.2, para. 20.
- ³⁰ E/C.12/SWE/CO/7, para. 37.
- ³¹ A/HRC/55/47/Add.2, paras. 14 and 98 (j).
- ³² Conference room paper of the International Independent Expert Mechanism to Advance Racial Justice and Equality in Law Enforcement on its visit to Sweden, paras. 29, 30 and 34. See also A/HRC/55/47/Add.2, paras. 46, 47 and 72.
- ³³ A/HRC/55/47/Add.2, para. 98 (f).
- ³⁴ Conference room paper of the International Independent Expert Mechanism to Advance Racial Justice and Equality in Law Enforcement on its visit to Sweden, paras. 51 and 52.
- ³⁵ CRC/C/SWE/CO/6-7, paras. 16 and 17. See also A/HRC/54/69, para. 5.
- ³⁶ E/C.12/SWE/CO/7, paras. 30 and 31.
- ³⁷ CAT/C/SWE/CO/8, paras. 4 (d), 9 and 10.
- ³⁸ Ibid., para. 12.
- ³⁹ Ibid., paras. 13 and 14. See also A/HRC/54/69, para. 5.
- ⁴⁰ Conference room paper of the International Independent Expert Mechanism to Advance Racial Justice and Equality in Law Enforcement on its visit to Sweden, paras. 45 and 59.
- ⁴¹ CAT/C/SWE/CO/8, paras. 15 and 16.
- ⁴² A/HRC/54/69, para. 5.
- ⁴³ CRPD/C/SWE/CO/2-3, paras. 33 and 34.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid., para. 34.
- ⁴⁵ CRC/C/SWE/CO/6-7, paras. 44 and 45. See also conference room paper of the International Independent Expert Mechanism to Advance Racial Justice and Equality in Law Enforcement on its visit to Sweden, para. 16.
- ⁴⁶ CRPD/C/SWE/CO/2-3, paras. 29 and 30.
- ⁴⁷ A/HRC/57/50/Add.3, para. 60 (n).
- ⁴⁸ CRPD/C/SWE/CO/2-3, paras. 31 and 32.
- ⁴⁹ CEDAW/C/SWE/CO/10, paras. 19 and 20.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid., para. 28.
- ⁵¹ CRC/C/SWE/CO/6-7, para. 20 (c).
- ⁵² CRPD/C/SWE/CO/2-3, paras. 46, 61 and 62.
- ⁵³ UNESCO submission for the universal periodic review of Sweden, paras. 9 and 16.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid., paras. 8 and 15.
- ⁵⁵ CRC/C/SWE/CO/6-7, para. 22.
- ⁵⁶ CRPD/C/SWE/CO/2-3, para. 48.
- ⁵⁷ CEDAW/C/SWE/CO/10, paras. 47 and 48.
- ⁵⁸ CRPD/C/SWE/CO/2-3, paras. 49 and 50.
- ⁵⁹ CEDAW/C/SWE/CO/10, paras. 25 and 26.
- ⁶⁰ CAT/C/SWE/CO/8, para. 37. See also CEDAW/C/SWE/CO/10, paras. 25 and 26.
- ⁶¹ E/C.12/SWE/CO/7, paras. 22–25.
- ⁶² CEDAW/C/SWE/CO/10, paras. 33 and 34.
- ⁶³ CRPD/C/SWE/CO/2-3, paras. 57 and 58.
- ⁶⁴ E/C.12/SWE/CO/7, paras. 26 and 27. See also CRPD/C/SWE/CO/2-3, paras. 59 and 60.
- ⁶⁵ E/C.12/SWE/CO/7, paras. 28 and 29.
- ⁶⁶ CRC/C/SWE/CO/6-7, para. 36.
- ⁶⁷ E/C.12/SWE/CO/7, paras. 26 and 27.
- ⁶⁸ CRC/C/SWE/CO/6-7, paras. 32 and 33.
- ⁶⁹ Ibid., para. 19.
- ⁷⁰ CRPD/C/SWE/CO/2-3, paras. 53 and 54.
- ⁷¹ CRC/C/SWE/CO/6-7, paras. 37 and 38. See also E/C.12/SWE/CO/7, paras. 36 and 37.
- ⁷² E/C.12/SWE/CO/7, para. 37.
- ⁷³ CEDAW/C/SWE/CO/10, paras. 31 and 32. See also E/C.12/SWE/CO/7, paras. 36 and 37.
- ⁷⁴ CRPD/C/SWE/CO/2-3, paras. 51 and 52.
- ⁷⁵ E/C.12/SWE/CO/7, paras. 18 and 19.
- ⁷⁶ Ibid., paras. 10, 11, 18 and 19.
- ⁷⁷ CRC/C/SWE/CO/6-7, para. 15.

- 78 CAT/C/SWE/CO/8, paras. 34 and 35. See also CEDAW/C/SWE/CO/10, paras. 23 and 24.
- 79 CEDAW/C/SWE/CO/10, para. 24.
- 80 CAT/C/SWE/CO/8, paras. 27 and 29 (a).
- 81 CRC/C/SWE/CO/6-7, para. 23.
- 82 UNESCO submission, paras. 4 and 14.
- 83 CRC/C/SWE/CO/6-7, paras. 25 and 26.
- 84 Ibid., para. 24.
- 85 Ibid., para. 46.
- 86 Ibid., para. 27.
- 87 CEDAW/C/SWE/CO/10, paras. 21 and 22.
- 88 CRC/C/SWE/CO/6-7, para. 7.
- 89 Ibid., para. 28.
- 90 Ibid., para. 29.
- 91 CRPD/C/SWE/CO/2-3, paras. 5, 6 and 53.
- 92 Ibid., paras. 27 and 28.
- 93 Ibid., paras. 11, 12, 21 and 22.
- 94 Ibid., paras. 13–18. See also CEDAW/C/SWE/CO/10, paras. 41 and 42; and CRC/C/SWE/CO/6-7, para. 31.
- 95 A/HRC/57/50/Add.3, paras. 36–39. See also E/C.12/SWE/CO/7, para. 15.
- 96 A/HRC/57/50/Add.3 para. 60 (d) and (h).
- 97 Ibid., paras. 40 and 60 (f).
- 98 Ibid., para. 50.
- 99 E/C.12/SWE/CO/7, para. 15. See also A/HRC/57/50/Add.3, para. 60 (m); and CEDAW/C/SWE/CO/10, paras. 39, 40, 43 and 44.
- 100 CEDAW/C/SWE/CO/10, paras. 43 and 44.
- 101 CRPD/C/SWE/CO/2-3, paras. 37 and 38.
- 102 UNHCR submission, pp. 1 and 2. See also A/HRC/55/47/Add.2, para. 62.
- 103 UNHCR submission, p. 2.
- 104 CRPD/C/SWE/CO/2-3, paras. 39, 40, 49 and 50; and CRC/C/SWE/CO/6-7, paras. 42 and 43.
- 105 UNHCR submission, p. 5.
- 106 E/C.12/SWE/CO/7, paras. 16 and 17.
- 107 CAT/C/SWE/CO/8, paras. 17 and 20.
- 108 UNHCR submission, pp. 3 and 4.
- 109 CAT/C/SWE/CO/8, para. 22. See also A/HRC/55/47/Add.2, para. 63.
- 110 E/C.12/SWE/CO/7, paras. 32 and 33.
- 111 UNHCR submission, pp. 4 and 5.
- 112 Ibid., pp. 2 and 3.
- 113 CRC/C/SWE/CO/6-7, para. 21.
- 114 CEDAW/C/SWE/CO/10, paras. 29 and 30. See also UNHCR submission, pp. 2 and 3.