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**Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner
for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the
High Commissioner and the Secretary-General**

Human rights bodies and mechanisms

**Activities of special rapporteurs, independent experts and
working groups of the special procedures of the Human
Rights Council undertaken in 2024, including updated
information on special procedures and information on the
thirtieth annual meeting of special rapporteurs, independent
experts and chairs of working groups**

Report of the Secretariat*

* The present report was submitted to the conference services for processing after the deadline for technical reasons beyond the control of the submitting office.



Contents

	<i>Page</i>
I. Introduction	3
II. Facts and figures	3
A. New mandates.....	3
B. Mandate holders.....	3
C. Country visits.....	3
D. Communications	3
E. Media outreach and public awareness	4
F. Thematic reports and studies	4
G. Contributions to standard-setting and the protection and promotion of human rights.....	7
H. Forums, consultations, workshops and other meetings.....	7
I. Engagement with other parts of the United Nations system and regional mechanisms	8
J. Contribution of special procedures to prevention	10
K. Follow-up activities	10
L. Cooperation with special procedure mandate holders	10
M. Contribution of special procedures to technical cooperation	12
III. Coordination Committee of Special Procedures	13
IV. Acts of intimidation and reprisal	15
V. Thirtieth annual meeting of special rapporteurs, independent experts and chairs of working groups.....	15
A. Coordination Committee.....	16
B. Thematic issues and working methods	16
C. Consultations with stakeholders	17

I. Introduction

1. The present report contains an overview of the special procedures system, highlighting activities undertaken in 2024. It also contains information on the work of the Coordination Committee of Special Procedures. The main points and the conclusions reached during the thirtieth annual meeting of special rapporteurs, independent experts and chairs of working groups of the special procedures are also elaborated in the report.

II. Facts and figures

A. New mandates

2. During 2024, the Human Rights Council continued with the same number of special procedure mandates, which stands at 60, of which 46 are thematic and 14 are country specific.

B. Mandate holders

3. The special procedures system currently includes 88 mandate holder positions, with 87 active mandate holders.¹ The gender balance continued to reflect more women than men: 64 per cent of current mandate holders are women and 36 per cent are men.

4. As at 31 December 2024, mandate holders came from States Members of the United Nations belonging to the following groups: African States, 19.54 per cent; Asia-Pacific States, 21.84 per cent; Eastern European States, 10.34 per cent; Latin American and Caribbean States, 20.69 per cent; and Western European and other States, 27.59 per cent.²

5. A list of current and former mandate holders for existing mandates is available on the website,³ along with a list of mandate holders for discontinued mandates.

C. Country visits

6. Mandate holders conducted 57 country visits to 44 States. A total of 128 States and 1 non-member observer State had extended standing invitations as at 31 December 2024.⁴

7. As at 31 December 2024, 174 States had been visited by at least one mandate holder, while 19 States had not yet received any visits. Among the latter, 3 had not received requests and 16 had not accepted visit requests.⁵ In 2024, Vanuatu accepted a visit of a mandate holder for the first time.

D. Communications

8. In 2024, mandate holders transmitted 665 communications, 596 of which were sent jointly, to 124 States and 145 non-State actors. The communications covered 1,265 individuals, 414 of whom were identified as female. A total of 463 replies, of which 417 were substantive, were received in 2024, including replies to communications sent before 2024. A total of 349 replies to communications sent in 2024 were received, of which

¹ The mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic will start when the mandate of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic ends.

² [A/HRC/58/70/Add.1](#), sect. II.

³ See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures-human-rights-council>.

⁴ [A/HRC/58/70/Add.1](#), sects. III and IV.

⁵ *Ibid.*, sect. VII. Information on the status of all country visits requested by mandate holders and on forthcoming visits is available at <https://spinternet.ohchr.org/Home.aspx?lang=en>.

308 (46.62 per cent reply rate)⁶ were substantive replies. Some communications received more than one reply.⁷

9. Three communications reports were issued in 2024. Communications sent and replies received are made available on a dedicated website,⁸ through which users can access the database of all communications sent and replies received since the eighteenth session of the Human Rights Council. Communications and replies from Governments and others can be searched by mandate, country, geographical region, time period and/or by the communications reports submitted to the Council since 2011. All communications are made public after 60 days, and other letters, which are related to draft or existing legislation, policy or practice not deemed to be in compliance with international human rights norms and standards, after 48 hours.

10. In 2024, the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances transmitted 1,198 new alleged cases of enforced disappearance to States, of which 809 were transmitted under its urgent action procedure. The Working Group transmitted 74 newly reported cases of violations under its urgent and standard procedures concerning acts tantamount to enforced disappearance allegedly perpetrated by non-State actors in Libya (2), Myanmar (1), the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic (8), Yemen (47) and the State of Palestine (16). The Working Group was able to clarify 212 cases.

11. The Working Group on Arbitrary Detention issued 71 opinions under its regular communications procedure in 2024. It has initiated or joined 30 urgent appeals, 101 allegation letters and 1 other letter. In addition, in 2024, the Working Group received information indicating that at least 50 subjects of its opinions had been released.

12. Special procedures have also used the communications procedure to address cross-cutting issues affecting several States and stakeholders. They sent similar communications to a variety of stakeholders, related, for example, to the impact of arms transfers; the lack of accountability for business practices; and the negative impact of commercial and development projects on the environment, as well as on local and Indigenous communities.

E. Media outreach and public awareness

13. Mandate holders issued 500 media products, either individually or jointly, of which 389 were press releases, 60 were media advisories and 51 were media statements, raising awareness and voicing concerns regarding a range of human rights issues, including individual cases.

F. Thematic reports and studies

14. In 2024, mandate holders submitted 181 reports; 133 were submitted to the Human Rights Council, including 64 country visit reports, and 48 to the General Assembly.⁹

15. In order to facilitate access to information on upcoming reports and related calls for inputs, the web page compiling all recent calls for inputs and questionnaires issued by mandate holders is regularly updated. The themes of upcoming reports are also announced in advance to facilitate engagement.¹⁰

16. The following mandate holders devoted one of their reports to outlining their vision for and approach to their mandates: the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change;¹¹ the Special Rapporteur on the rights of

⁶ As of 2019, the response rate includes only substantive replies.

⁷ A/HRC/58/70/Add.1, sects. IX and X.

⁸ See <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org>.

⁹ See A/HRC/58/70/Add.1, sect. XI, for the list of reports and the themes addressed.

¹⁰ See www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures-human-rights-council/reports-and-related-calls-input.

¹¹ A/HRC/56/46.

persons with disabilities;¹² the Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order;¹³ the Special Rapporteur on the elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy (Hansen's disease) and their family members;¹⁴ the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism;¹⁵ the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence;¹⁶ and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran.¹⁷

17. The thematic reports published in 2024 addressed a wide range of human rights issues. Seven cross-cutting themes emerged, in particular: the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; women's human rights and gender; the prevention of human rights violations and abuses; security, conflict and peacebuilding; elections and democracy; climate change; new technologies; and children's rights. All reports authored by mandate holders on climate change, migration, new technologies and the Sustainable Development Goals, disaggregated by Goal, may be accessed on the web page on cross-cutting thematic issues.¹⁸

18. All special procedures' conclusions and recommendations are available in the report of the Secretary-General on this matter,¹⁹ which provides a comprehensive overview of all the reports presented by special procedure mandate holders in 2024. In that report, references are made to Our Common Agenda, the Pact for the Future and how the conclusions and recommendations of special procedure mandate holders contribute to making the human rights system responsive and innovative in confronting human rights challenges and enhancing synergies between human rights and all pillars of the work of the United Nations.

19. Some reports addressed the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, including the reports of: the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities,²⁰ the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders²¹ and the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children.²²

20. Women's human rights and gender featured prominently in several reports, including the reports of: the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan,²³ the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises,²⁴ the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions,²⁵ the Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes,²⁶ the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity,²⁷ the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences²⁸ and the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls.²⁹

21. Mandate holders continued to focus on the prevention of human rights violations and on peace and security issues in the reports of: the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and

¹² [A/HRC/55/56](#).

¹³ [A/HRC/57/49](#).

¹⁴ [A/HRC/56/59](#).

¹⁵ [A/HRC/55/48](#).

¹⁶ [A/HRC/57/50](#) and [A/79/180](#).

¹⁷ [A/79/371](#).

¹⁸ See www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures-human-rights-council/cross-cutting-thematic-issues.

¹⁹ [A/HRC/58/20](#).

²⁰ [A/79/179](#).

²¹ [A/79/123](#).

²² [A/79/161](#).

²³ [A/HRC/56/25](#).

²⁴ [A/79/178](#).

²⁵ [A/79/172](#).

²⁶ [A/79/163](#).

²⁷ [A/HRC/56/49](#) and [A/79/151](#).

²⁸ [A/HRC/56/48](#) and [A/79/325](#).

²⁹ [A/HRC/56/51](#).

protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression,³⁰ the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association,³¹ the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context,³² the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons,³³ the Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination,³⁴ the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief,³⁵ the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions,³⁶ the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment³⁷ and the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children.³⁸

22. Mandate holders addressed the issues of elections and democratic processes in the reports of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances,³⁹ the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity⁴⁰ and the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers.⁴¹

23. Mandate holders continued to maintain a focus on climate change in the reports of: the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change,⁴² the Special Rapporteur on the right to development,⁴³ the Special Rapporteur on the right to food⁴⁴ and the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons.⁴⁵

24. The impact of artificial intelligence and new technologies on human rights was addressed in several reports, including the reports of: the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent,⁴⁶ the Special Rapporteur on the right to education,⁴⁷ the Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity,⁴⁸ the Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy,⁴⁹ the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance⁵⁰ and the Special Rapporteur on the sale, sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children.⁵¹

25. Finally, several mandate holders focused on children's rights in their reports, including those of the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of human rights by persons with albinism,⁵² the Special Rapporteur on the right to development,⁵³ the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders,⁵⁴ the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of

³⁰ [A/79/319](#).

³¹ [A/79/263](#).

³² [A/HRC/55/53](#).

³³ [A/79/334](#).

³⁴ [A/HRC/57/45](#).

³⁵ [A/79/182](#).

³⁶ [A/HRC/56/56](#).

³⁷ [A/79/181](#).

³⁸ [A/79/161](#).

³⁹ [A/HRC/57/54/Add.4](#).

⁴⁰ [A/79/151](#).

⁴¹ [A/HRC/56/62](#).

⁴² [A/79/176](#).

⁴³ [A/79/168](#).

⁴⁴ [A/HRC/55/49](#).

⁴⁵ [A/HRC/56/47](#).

⁴⁶ [A/HRC/57/70](#).

⁴⁷ [A/79/520](#).

⁴⁸ [A/79/170](#).

⁴⁹ [A/HRC/55/46](#) and [A/79/173](#).

⁵⁰ [A/HRC/56/68](#).

⁵¹ [A/79/122](#).

⁵² [A/79/175](#).

⁵³ [A/HRC/57/43](#).

⁵⁴ [A/HRC/55/50](#).

migrants⁵⁵ and the Special Rapporteur on the sale, sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children.⁵⁶

G. Contributions to standard-setting and the protection and promotion of human rights

26. The following mandate holders contributed to clarifying human rights norms and standards in relation to their mandates:

(a) The Special Rapporteur on the right to food provided a framework for the advancement of the rights of small-scale fishers, fish workers and Indigenous Peoples and a guide for States to ensure that the world's aquatic ecosystems were biodiverse and safe, and that States fulfilled human rights obligations despite climate change challenges;⁵⁷

(b) The Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy set out a proposal for the updating of General Assembly resolution 45/95, entitled "Guidelines for the regulation of computerized personal data files", in order to bring its content into line with the sociotechnological reality of the twenty-first century;⁵⁸

(c) The Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context reviewed and assessed the current laws, policies and practices of various resettlement actors and outlined the key parameters for developing future resettlement guidelines;⁵⁹

(d) The Special Rapporteur on the right to development presented a climate justice framework comprising four pillars (mitigation, adaptation, remediation and transformation) and 12 overarching human rights principles;⁶⁰

(e) The Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights set out seven key principles that should be taken into consideration in ensuring that financial decisions uphold and maintain standards of living.⁶¹

27. In 2024, special procedure mandate holders submitted individual and joint amicus curiae to the Supreme Court of India, the Supreme Court of the United States of America, the Jerusalem District Court, the District Court of The Hague, the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, the European Court of Human Rights and the International Criminal Court.⁶² The submissions, which aim to clarify the interpretation of international human rights law at national, regional and international levels, address a range of issues, including homelessness and adequate housing; the racially disproportionate impact of mandatory life sentencing for felony murder charges; violence against persons with albinism; international crimes committed in the Occupied Palestinian Territory the right to seek asylum and the prohibition of torture; and home demolitions in relation to international human rights standards.

H. Forums, consultations, workshops and other meetings

28. In 2024, mandate holders organized or attended 245 forums, consultations, expert meetings, workshops and events, in collaboration and/or engaging with Governments, entities of the United Nations system, civil society and the private sector.⁶³

⁵⁵ [A/79/213](#).

⁵⁶ [A/HRC/55/55](#).

⁵⁷ [A/HRC/55/49](#).

⁵⁸ [A/79/173](#).

⁵⁹ [A/79/317](#).

⁶⁰ [A/79/168](#).

⁶¹ [A/HRC/55/54](#).

⁶² See [A/HRC/58/70/Add.1](#), sect. XXII, for the list of amicus curiae and other submissions.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, sect. XIX, for a non-exhaustive list of events organized by mandate holders.

29. The Forum on Minority Issues held its seventeenth session in Geneva, on 28 and 29 November 2024, under the guidance of the Special Rapporteur on minority issues. Participants at the Forum discussed the theme “Minority representation and self-representation in public spaces and discourses”. The session was attended by almost 790 participants from 96 countries, including representatives of States, United Nations mechanisms, bodies and specialized agencies, funds and programmes, intergovernmental and regional organizations and mechanisms in the field of human rights, national human rights institutions and other relevant national bodies, minority groups and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as academics and experts on minority issues. The report was submitted to the Human Rights Council for consideration at its fifty-eighth session.⁶⁴

30. The thirteenth annual session of the Forum on Business and Human Rights took place in Geneva, from 25 to 27 November 2024, under the guidance of the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises. The session focused on the theme “Realizing the ‘Smart Mix of Measures’ to protect human rights in the context of business activities”. The Forum brought together a record number of nearly 3,000 in-person participants, with over 1,000 joining online, from 156 countries: 46 per cent of stakeholders came from civil society at large, including workers and representatives of Indigenous Peoples and of academia; 34 per cent from the private sector; and 7 per cent from Member States. With 25 sessions, 24 “snapshot” series and innovative spaces, such as informal dialogues and networking hubs, the Forum provided a platform for meaningful engagement among various stakeholder groups. The report on the Forum will be submitted to the Human Rights Council at its fifty-ninth session.

I. Engagement with other parts of the United Nations system and regional mechanisms

31. Throughout the year, mandate holders sought closer cooperation with the wider United Nations system, including its agencies, funds and programmes, and with regional mechanisms. A non-exhaustive list of those activities is available in the addendum to the present report.⁶⁵

32. Special procedure mandate holders continued to provide short documents in advance of the presentation of their reports to the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly, highlighting the main issues raised and the elements on which they would welcome the views of States and other stakeholders, with the objective of enhancing interaction with the Council.

33. In 2021, in our Common Agenda, the Secretary-General called for the fuller use of human rights mechanisms, including special procedures, to solve pressing social, economic and political challenges and for the strengthening of the links between those mechanisms and other processes to maximize their impact. He also called for finding ways to put the human rights mechanisms on a more sustainable financial footing. In adopting the Pact for the Future, Member States heeded that call by requesting the Secretary-General to assess the need for adequate, predictable, increased and sustainable financing of human rights mechanisms for efficient and effective mandate delivery to enable them to respond to the range of human rights challenges facing the international community with impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity.⁶⁶

34. The Coordination Committee of Special Procedures engaged with various United Nations interlocutors to strengthen cooperation and enhance awareness about the achievements of the special procedures system. The Committee met with the Secretary-General, the Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations Development Programme, the Assistant Secretary-General for Development Coordination, the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, the President of the General Assembly, the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Bureau of the Third Committee, the Co-facilitators of the Summit of the Future and representatives of States and NGOs. The level of engagement on

⁶⁴ [A/HRC/58/69](#).

⁶⁵ [A/HRC/58/70/Add.1](#), sect. XX.

⁶⁶ General Assembly resolution 79/1, para. 74 (a).

the part of United Nations interlocutors was significant and substantive and the meetings were part of overall efforts to foster the engagement of special procedures with other processes of the United Nations system. Several areas of engagement have been developed, including the sharing of information related to events taking place under the auspices of the Organization in which special procedure mandate holders can participate, the sharing of information on the contributions of mandate holders to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, the prevention of human rights violations and abuses and peacebuilding and the collection of success stories on cooperation and engagement between United Nations entities, country teams, agencies and special procedures.

35. The Coordination Committee continued to engage with all parties concerned on the Summit of the Future. The Committee met with the co-facilitators on the Summit and participated in the consultations held in April 2024, stressing that human rights and a fuller use of the human rights mechanisms should be comprehensively and substantively reflected in the outcome document of the Summit. During the Summit, the Chair of the Committee also participated in the high-level event organized by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on the critical role of human rights.

36. During their thirtieth annual meeting, as a follow-up to the adoption of the Pact for the Future, mandate holders adopted a joint declaration reaffirming human rights as central to a peaceful, inclusive and sustainable future. They called for stronger integration of human rights into United Nations initiatives and for urgent action to address the severe underfunding of the United Nations human rights pillar. Highlighting global challenges, they urged measures to protect people, rebuild institutions and ensure justice. Concerned by efforts to undermine their independence, they stressed the need for political will to defend United Nations mechanisms. The experts called on Governments to fully integrate human rights into global goals and pledged to build trust between the United Nations and those it serves, ensuring freedom, peace and sustainable development for all.

37. In 2024, two mandate holders participated in Arria-formula meetings of the Security Council:

(a) On 25 March 2024, the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights participated in an Arria-formula meeting of the Security Council on the impact of unilateral coercive measures on global counter-terrorism efforts;

(b) On 25 November 2024, the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights participated in an Arria-formula meeting of the Security Council on the humanitarian impact of unilateral coercive measures;

(c) On 6 December 2024, the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities participated in an Arria-formula meeting of the Security Council on persons with disabilities in situations of armed conflict and related humanitarian crises.

38. Engagement also continued with the peacebuilding architecture. Progress in raising awareness and improving the work of special procedure mandate holders on prevention of human rights violations and peacebuilding was made through active participation in meetings related to prevention and in the preparation and dissemination of various written inputs.

39. Some special procedure mandate holders participated in the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council in July 2024.

40. Cooperation with other human rights mechanisms was also strengthened. The Coordination Committee had a meeting with the chairs of the treaty bodies to continue developing areas of cooperation between special procedures and treaty bodies.

41. In relation to cooperation with regional organizations, special procedure mandate holders consolidated their engagement with those bodies, including through joint participation in meetings and activities, the holding of joint seminars and visits and the issuance of joint statements and reports.

J. Contribution of special procedures to prevention

42. Several avenues and areas of cooperation continued to be developed on the contribution of special procedures to prevention, including by focusing reports on issues related to the peace and security, peacebuilding and prevention architecture of the United Nations system through the organization of joint events, the inclusion of related issues in country visits and recommendations, engagement with various United Nations entities and interactions with intergovernmental bodies such as the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission. Information on reports by special procedures related to peace and security, peacebuilding and prevention as well as their interactions with the related architecture has been recorded and made available in various public reports and on the special procedures' website.

43. On 15 October 2024, Clément Nyaletsossi Voule, former Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, and Anita Ramasastry, former member of the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises and former Chair of the Coordination Committee of Special Procedures, participated in an event organized by OHCHR and the Quaker United Nations Office in Geneva focused on the role of the special procedures in sustaining peace and preventing conflict. The discussion underscored the interconnection between peace, security and human rights, highlighting how the international human rights framework serves as a foundation for conflict prevention. Drawing from a recent project by OHCHR and the Quaker United Nations Office, the speakers presented concrete examples of how mandate holders contribute to conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict recovery. They also explored recommendations for strengthening collaboration between the special procedures and United Nations peacebuilding efforts, offering actionable proposals in preparation for the 2025 review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture.

K. Follow-up activities

44. Efforts have been made to make the work and the recommendations of the special procedures more visible and accessible, with a view to facilitating follow-up activities. Recommendations of the special procedures continued to be used by OHCHR, including its field presences and United Nations country teams, and are available in the Universal Human Rights Index.⁶⁷

45. Mandate holders continued to prioritize follow-up to and implementation of their assessments, conclusions and recommendations. They worked with States and with the United Nations, including United Nations country teams, to ensure the integration of their advice and recommendations into the work of the Organization. Mandate holders issued 292 follow-up communications to cases previously transmitted to States and to non-State actors, including follow-up press releases. They also sent questionnaires and convened meetings and consultations. A non-exhaustive list of follow-up activities is contained in the addendum to the present report.⁶⁸

46. Special procedures use a combination of tools and networks to foster implementation and to collaborate with other mandates, human rights mechanisms and the other parts of the United Nations system, including United Nations country teams.

L. Cooperation with special procedure mandate holders

47. Owing to their independence and expertise in addressing the wide array of issues covered by the 60 special procedure mandates, mandate holders have the unique ability to offer independent examination and analysis of issues and situations in the light of human rights norms and standards. They conduct country visits; advise on thematic and country-specific issues; raise concerns regarding individual cases directly with relevant

⁶⁷ See <https://uhri.ohchr.org>.

⁶⁸ A/HRC/58/70/Add.1, sect. XIII.

parties; develop international standards; and facilitate national and international debate on human rights issues. Special procedure mandate holders work together to promote human rights mainstreaming, connect various sectors of society and draw attention to human rights issues, including those that might otherwise remain invisible. In achieving those ends, the full cooperation of all concerned, in particular States, is indispensable.

48. The issue of cooperation from States, and the assessment of such cooperation, remains a priority for the special procedures system, taking all aspects of the work of mandate holders into account. Cooperation can take many forms, entailing responses to communications, the acceptance of visits, responses to requests for input for annual reports, follow-up to the recommendations made by mandate holders and overall engagement with special procedures. Improved assessment of the various dimensions of cooperation by States with special procedures continued during the reporting period. Looking back at the last five years, while there are instances of full cooperation as well as complete lack of cooperation by States, in the majority, cases continue to present a mixed record. Specific tools to provide a comprehensive picture of State cooperation have been developed, based on systematizing information related to country visits and communications and the maintenance of related databases and websites. Given the multifaceted dimensions of cooperation, the approach chosen has been to combine, in the addendum to the present report, two tables containing all relevant information related to States' cooperation on communications and the country visits of special procedures. The addendum also contains information on the status of cooperation, including the number of standing invitations; the number of visits undertaken in 2024; the number of visits in the past five years;⁶⁹ States that have never received a visit from a mandate holder; States with more than five pending requests for visits; the number of pending visits per country; and the number of communications by country and the responses received.⁷⁰ The enhanced system is intended to better assess cooperation and actions taken on all sides. An OHCHR web page reflecting the above detailed information, including the status of country visits and related requests, is regularly updated.⁷¹

49. Available data indicate that special procedures generally enjoy fruitful cooperation from States and other stakeholders. As at 31 December 2023, 128 out of 193 Member States (66.32 per cent) and 1 non-member observer State had extended a standing invitation to thematic special procedures.⁷² The number of States that have never received a visit by a mandate holder decreased to 19. While the number of visits by mandate holders decreased in 2024 because of the financial situation, seven countries that had not received in the last five years opened their doors to mandate holders: Benin, Guinea-Bissau, the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Thailand, the United Arab Emirates and Vanuatu (which received a visit for the first time in its history). The geographical coverage of the visits undertaken indicates that mandate holders continue to visit all regions in a balanced manner. Some States received more than one visit by mandate holders per year, and 10 States received five or more visits in the past five years (Australia, Bangladesh, the Central African Republic, Chile, Colombia, Honduras, Maldives, Mali, Peru and the United States).

50. With regard to country-related mandates, some countries, such as Cambodia, the Central African Republic, Mali and Somalia, were willing to grant access to the country-related mandate holder, whereas Afghanistan, Belarus, Burundi, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Eritrea, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel and Myanmar continued to decline access. Moreover, there were differences, with some States refusing any engagement and others engaging with mandate holders outside of country visits.

51. Initiatives have been taken to illustrate that cooperation is mutually beneficial. The collection of information on the impact of the work of special procedure mandate holders continued. An informal conversation with the Coordination Committee on the impact of the work of special procedures was held on 26 April 2024 with the participation of States, United Nations agencies and representatives of civil society. Discussions focused on sharing examples and documenting the various positive effects that the work of mandate holders can

⁶⁹ Covering the period from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2024.

⁷⁰ A/HRC/58/70/Add.1, sects. III–X.

⁷¹ See www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/SP/Pages/CountryandothervisitsSP.aspx.

⁷² A/HRC/58/70/Add.1, sect. III.

have at the national, regional and international levels and exploring how to maximize such beneficial results. The conversation allowed for constructive and substantive exchanges on the work of special procedures, demonstrating the variety of impacts that their work may have. The examples provided by States were varied and telling. In addition, more stories have been added to the web page on “Making a difference”.⁷³

52. Mandate holders have carried out assessments of their work or participated in various meetings with stakeholders to assess the impact of their work, in particular when concluding the term of their mandates. Such activities reveal that mandate holders have played a crucial role by offering essential solutions, working towards rendering the human rights system more responsive and innovative in addressing challenges.

53. Mandate holders sent 665 communications in 2024, with a resulting substantive response rate of 46.62 per cent.

54. While some States devoted considerable efforts to developing constructive cooperation with mandate holders, others continued to refuse their visits or accepted only a select few. A total of 91 countries have not received a visit by a special procedure mandate holder during the past five years, although 80 have received at least one request. Twenty-four countries did not accept a visit, despite having five or more pending requests during the same time period. Cooperation may be partial or selective: (a) some States cooperated only with a selected few mandate holders or responded to communications but did not accept visits, in spite of having extended standing invitations; (b) some States announced that they would boycott certain mandates; and (c) some States set conditions, limiting access to the examination of certain regions within their territory.

55. During the reporting period, a number of mandate holders were once again subjected to public ad hominem attacks for carrying out their work. The attacks are cause for serious concern. Some cases are particularly worrying, as they may affect the personal security and integrity of mandate holders. In extreme cases, mandate holders have been subjected to personal attacks, including derogatory comments, within United Nations bodies, during country visits and in other contexts. Recent examples include disparaging personal remarks, verbal attacks, negative campaigns in various public media and aggressive or insulting public statements by State representatives or representatives of civil society. In addition, claims of partial and unprofessional conduct designed to damage reputations have been made against mandate holders. Moreover, some attacks have included publicly involving family members, creating potential security concerns. This type of behaviour, which is taken seriously by the special procedures and the Coordination Committee, requires a coherent and systematic response from all concerned. On 16 May 2024, the Coordination Committee issued a press release strongly condemning such attacks and calling for the full support and solidarity of all stakeholders, in particular States, to allow human rights experts to discharge their mandates in a safe and enabling environment, thus upholding their independence and legitimacy. Counting on the continued support of the President of the Human Rights Council and the High Commissioner for Human Rights to condemn personal attacks against special procedures in the strongest terms, the Committee called for personal attacks and threats to cease immediately.

M. Contribution of special procedures to technical cooperation

56. Special procedures continued to provide advice and recommendations to States and other stakeholders using a variety of tools and processes,⁷⁴ including thematic reports. Thematic reports contain recommendations that provide technical advice to States and other stakeholders to help build their respective capacities to, among other things, prevent human rights violations and ensure full compliance with international human rights norms.

57. The recommendations issued after country visits, as well as the engagement of special procedures with States and stakeholders in following up on those recommendations, play a

⁷³ See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures-human-rights-council/making-difference-special-procedures-human-rights-council>.

⁷⁴ A/HRC/58/70/Add.1, sect. XXI.

significant role. Communications issued by special procedures contain important advice to States and other stakeholders. Some communications, known as “Other letters (OLs)”, include recommendations on how draft or existing legislation, policies or practices could be designed or revised to fully comply with international human rights standards. Such communications, which are a way to provide meaningful technical advice to States, have been identified as successful tools for the prevention of human rights violations. Mandate holders also engage and provide advice to businesses and international corporations, including through the communications process.

58. Special procedures respond to requests from States and other stakeholders for advice and recommendations on a series of human rights issues, such as the development of laws and policies, the establishment of specific human rights plans or programmes and specific responses to human rights challenges.

59. As shown in the addendum to the present report,⁷⁵ mandate holders use various means to engage with States and other stakeholders to provide advice on human rights issues. Examples of how the special procedures contribute to technical cooperation include the ongoing support provided by the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances to Chile, specifically in relation to its national plan for locating victims of enforced disappearance during the dictatorship. Moreover, the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions participated in and delivered a keynote address at a training-of-trainers session in the Philippines on the Model Protocol for a Legal Investigation of Extra-legal Arbitrary and Summary Executions (the Minnesota Protocol), aimed at investigators from the Government, the national human rights institution and NGOs.

III. Coordination Committee of Special Procedures

60. In 2024, the Coordination Committee of Special Procedures continued to facilitate coordination among mandate holders and interaction with a range of stakeholders. The Committee had three one-week meetings, two in Geneva and one in New York, and several additional virtual meetings. It had several virtual conversations with mandate holders and facilitated discussion among mandate holders on issues of common concern. Exceptionally, the membership of the 2023–2024 Committee was extended beyond one year due to the liquidity crisis, which prevented the holding of the annual meeting in June.

61. Despite significant obstacles, including financial constraints, the Coordination Committee remained resolute in defending the special procedures system. The liquidity crisis underscored the importance of sustainable and predictable funding for the special procedures. The Committee focused on safeguarding the independence and autonomy of mandate holders, including by engaging in discussions with the leadership of the United Nations and OHCHR. The Committee maintained dialogue and interaction with various stakeholders, including representatives of the United Nations, States and civil society. The Committee also held discussions with States in different formats, including conversations in New York and Geneva, as well as meetings with several geographical and political groups to discuss issues related to special procedures.

62. Meetings took place with the President of the Human Rights Council and the Chair of the Third Committee of the General Assembly to raise awareness about issues related to special procedures and their inputs to intergovernmental processes. The Committee engaged with the Bureau of the Third Committee and Member States on the resolution on the working methods of the Third Committee and its impact on the critical role and visibility of the special procedures in New York. The Chair of the Coordination Committee participated in the retreat of the Human Rights Council organized by the President of the Council in Rabat in November 2024. In addition, the Coordination Committee engaged with the Consultative Group of the Human Rights Council regarding the selection procedure for mandate holders and sent several letters containing the views of, and inputs from, outgoing mandate holders. The Committee also participated in several debates and discussions of the Council and facilitated

⁷⁵ Ibid.

joint statements.⁷⁶ The Chair of the Committee presented the annual report of special procedures to the Council,⁷⁷ which included facts and figures with regard to the special procedures and information on the achievements of the special procedures system.⁷⁸

63. A complete set of rules and guidelines governing the work of the special procedures system is contained in the Code of Conduct for Special Procedure Mandate Holders of the Human Rights Council and the Manual of Operations, and additional guidelines have been developed over the years. The Coordination Committee has a facilitation role in that context and has engaged with all stakeholders individually or in groups. The internal advisory procedure offers a more formal channel for complaints. The details of how to use the procedure are publicly available on the OHCHR website. The requests fall into three categories: (a) mandate holders seeking advice on contemplated activities; (b) specific cases referred by States or other stakeholders; and (c) cases highlighting policy or systemic issues that need to be addressed by the system. Individual cases and questions may require a simple response or the provision of advice on the way forward, whereas requests concerning global working method issues may entail more time and consultations and may require discussion and decisions to be taken at the annual meeting. The internal advisory procedure is confidential.

64. Under the internal advisory procedure, stakeholders have approached the Coordination Committee to raise questions or concerns. This has helped to clarify and improve working methods. The main outcomes of the procedure are available on the website. The issues raised in 2024 related to a variety of topics, including the following:

- (a) Communications, including how stakeholders' responses are considered by mandate holders, related press releases and the international framework guiding communications;
- (b) The use of social media by mandate holders;
- (c) Conflict of interest, including in relation to receipt of support from external stakeholders;
- (d) Cooperation and coordination among mandates, be it between thematic mandates or between thematic and country mandates;
- (e) Country visits, including procedures to agree a visit, the respect for the terms of reference for country visits and the independence of the mandate holders in deciding which countries or territories to visit, in line with United Nations rules and regulations;
- (f) Personal attacks against mandate holders;
- (g) Use of correct terminology to refer to States and territories;
- (h) Engagement and cooperation of mandate holders with civil society representatives;
- (i) Content of reports of special procedures.

65. There is a continued use of the internal advisory procedure by several stakeholders, including mandate holders. This mechanism proved vital in demonstrating the system's capacity for self-regulation. Since some of the issues brought to the attention to the Committee over the course of 2024 were of a systemic nature, the Committee proposed the holding of related discussions (for example, on social media or cooperation and coordination among mandate holders) during the thirtieth annual meeting.

66. The Coordination Committee pursued its initiatives in relation to the continuous improvement of the working methods of special procedures by engaging with relevant stakeholders, soliciting input and fostering discussions on issues, such as the procedures related to the use of social media or the various formats for communications.

⁷⁶ [A/HRC/58/70/Add.1](#), sect. XII.

⁷⁷ [A/HRC/55/69](#).

⁷⁸ [A/HRC/55/69/Add.1](#).

67. The Coordination Committee implemented the modalities for the disclosure of external support received through OHCHR and other sources. This disclosure was decided upon by mandate holders in 2014 to ensure full transparency about funding received from all sources and to avoid real and perceived conflict of interest. The Committee requested mandate holders to provide information on external support received in 2024. Of the 70 current mandate holders in place as at 31 December 2024 who responded, 40 indicated that they had received external support. Support was mostly in-kind, including research assistance and the granting of the use of facilities by their home institutions, administrative assistance and financial support, including for specific events or research. Financial support was, in most cases, provided by Governments, foundations or the home institutions of mandate holders.⁷⁹

IV. Acts of intimidation and reprisal

68. Special procedure mandate holders continued to take up cases concerning acts of intimidation and reprisal, not only in relation to their work, but also to the activities of other entities of the United Nations system in the field of human rights, implementing internal guidelines on reprisals and intimidation. In 2024, mandate holders continued to use communications, public statements, press releases, reports and meetings with various stakeholders to express their serious concern regarding all such acts. The issue of intimidation and reprisal was raised, as appropriate, with the President of the Human Rights Council and/or the Chair of the Third Committee of the General Assembly. Mandate holders held a dedicated discussion during their annual meeting and revised the enhanced response to reprisals adopted in 2015. The focal point of the Coordination Committee on the issue led the discussion and proposed that the Committee could collaborate with the President of the Human Rights Council and other like-minded actors to take a stronger position on this matter, as well as the possibility for the Committee to engage with Member States that have a track record of engaging in reprisals. Mandate holders recalled that the terms of reference on country visits represent an important tool for the use of mandate holders and the need to explore using United Nations field presences and country teams to mitigate cases of reprisals on the ground.

69. The most recent report of the Secretary-General on efforts to address acts of intimidation and reprisal against those seeking to cooperate or having cooperated with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights included information on allegations from seven communications concerning seven States taken up by special procedure mandate holders and follow-up information on cases concerning five States included in previous reports based on the continued work of mandate holders.⁸⁰ In 2024, special procedure mandate holders issued nine communications concerning eight States. Mandate holders also reported cases of intimidation and reprisal in their reports to the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly, in oral statements to the Council, in end-of-mission statements following country visits and in press releases.

V. Thirtieth annual meeting of special rapporteurs, independent experts and chairs of working groups

70. The thirtieth annual meeting of special rapporteurs, independent experts and chairs of working groups was held in Geneva from 9 to 13 December 2024, the first day being a day for informal talks among mandate holders.

71. The meeting focused on strategic and substantive issues and on working methods relating to the special procedures system. It took place against the backdrop of several challenges that have affected special procedures, including financial instability within the United Nations, political polarization and the international context and implications for special procedures, including their independence, of various ongoing reforms. Participants

⁷⁹ A/HRC/58/70/Add.1, sect. XIV.

⁸⁰ A/HRC/57/60, annexes I and II.

also addressed recent developments at the United Nations that may present opportunities, such as the follow-up to the Pact for the Future. In this challenging environment, the mandate holders sought to reaffirm the centrality of human rights and the role of the human rights system, including special procedures. It was also decided that future annual meetings should henceforth take place at the end of the calendar year.

A. Coordination Committee

72. The Chair of the Coordination Committee provided an overview of the activities undertaken during the 2023/24 cycle. Participants were informed about all activities of the Coordination Committee and its engagement with various stakeholders, including United Nations representatives, States and civil society. Challenges and opportunities faced by the system of special procedures and possible strategic responses were discussed and the priorities of the Committee were identified.

73. The meeting elected Surya Deva, the Special Rapporteur on the right to development, as Chair of the Coordination Committee for the period 2024–2025 and Jovana Jezdimirovic Ranito, Chair of the Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination, as Rapporteur of the meeting. The meeting selected three other members: Alexandra Xanthaki, Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights; Siobhán Mullally, Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children; and Tomoya Obokata, Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences. The outgoing Chair of the Committee and Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, Isha Dyfan, will continue to serve on the Committee as ex officio member for the coming year.

B. Thematic issues and working methods

74. In terms of strategic issues, mandate holders discussed developments within the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council that may affect special procedures. They addressed, in particular, the consequences of the resolution on working methods adopted by the Third Committee and its impact on the interaction of special procedures with entities based in New York. Under that resolution, the Bureaux of the Third Committee and the Human Rights Council have a mandate to address the increasing number of interactive dialogues with the Coordination Committee to coordinate on the schedule of interactive dialogues with special procedure mandate holders, chairs of treaty bodies, experts and other mechanisms in the Committee, with a view to mutually deciding on a road map aimed at developing a programme to progressively reduce the number of interactive dialogues to a manageable level at each annual session. Mandate holders expressed apprehension about these changes, highlighting the importance of timely and strategic engagement with Member States, particularly in New York, while underscoring the need for efficiency. Several challenges and good practices in interacting with the Third Committee were shared by mandate holders, such as the strategic importance of tailoring reports to their intended audience and the timely submission of reports. Mandate holders agreed on the need for the Coordination Committee to continue to follow these developments closely.

75. In terms of working methods, mandate holders were briefed on digital security and provided with concrete tools and advice on how to take digital security into account in the performance of their work. Mandate holders were also informed about documentation processes, including report editing and submission and the latest developments in that context. Mandate holders raised several concerns about these developments and agreed that the Coordination Committee would follow up on the issues raised, in particular the new editorial guidelines.

76. Mandate holders addressed the budgetary situation with representatives of OHCHR, including its impact on the human rights system and on special procedures in particular. Participants also discussed the critical role of a media strategy for special procedures, with several recommendations discussed with the OHCHR Media Section.

77. Mandate holders discussed how and when to use the different forms of communications (allegation letters, urgent appeals and other letters), including rules and working methods guiding their use and publication. It was recalled that communications are important tools at the disposal of mandate holders in the implementation of their mandates. Mandate holders also continued their discussion on the use of social media, new technologies and video and visual materials as well as related good practices and guidance in those areas. It was emphasized that all public statements made by mandate holders, including those disseminated through social media, must adhere to the Code of Conduct for Special Procedure Mandate Holders of the Human Rights Council and the applicable regulations outlined in the Manual of Operations. The Committee will continue to facilitate discussions among mandate holders on this issue.

78. Mandate holders had an exchange of views on how to ensure mutual cooperation and coordination, including between country and thematic mandates. Participants shared experiences, challenges and good practices in that context.

C. Consultations with stakeholders

79. Participants met with key stakeholders, including the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the President of the Human Rights Council and representatives of States and civil society.
