

Special Rapporteur  
on the human rights  
to safe drinking water  
and sanitation  
Pedro Arrojo-Agudo



**Newsletter**

October November December 2021

End of the year

## Words from the Special Rapporteur

*Dear friends, as we prepare to bid farewell to 2021 and welcome 2022, allow me to make a wish: that the experience of vulnerability that the pandemic and climate change makes us feel will enable us to understand how critical it is to leave no one behind; and that the urgent need to combat these threats ends up transforming our society in a permanent virtue of global democratic solidarity. If we make this wish come true, perhaps the pains that the pandemic and climate change are provoking will be the birth of the new world that the social forums proclaimed possible. I firmly believe this new world will be possible because it is necessary.*

*My deepest thank you for your collaboration during 2021; I look forward to continuing our joint efforts to make human rights to safe water and sanitation a reality.*

*I wish you and your loved ones a safe and healthy new year.*

**The Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation, Pedro Arrojo-Agudo.**

The year ahead

## Upcoming Activities

### **Thematic Reports**

In 2022 the Special Rapporteur will prepare and present thematic reports. The report "The human rights to safe water and sanitation of indigenous peoples: state of affairs and lessons from ancestral cultures" will be presented to the UN Human Rights Council. In addition, the Special Rapporteur will deliver to the UN General Assembly the report "The human rights to

safe drinking water and sanitation of people in impoverished rural areas". A call for contributions for both reports was issued in August 2021, receiving inputs from all over the world. Currently, the information is being systematized and processed.

### Open Channel

The Special Rapporteur will continue to work close to the right holders during 2022. His weekly open channel with civil society organizations, individuals and other stakeholders worldwide have become a valuable practice. In 2021 the Special Rapporteur had 50 bilateral meetings with various stakeholders. The registration form can be found [here](#).

## Past Activities

### The trimester in review



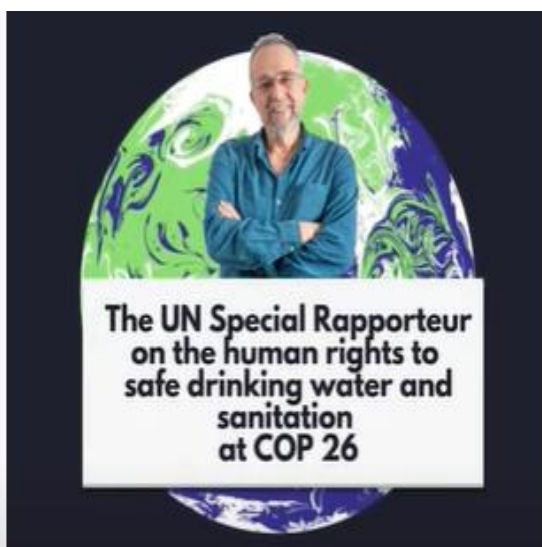
Presentation to the General Assembly 20 October 2021

#### Presentation to the UN General Assembly

The Special Rapporteur presented a thematic report on the risks and impacts of the commodification and financialization of water.

The [report](#) is available in UN official languages and a [friendly version](#).

Here is a [video](#) of the Special Rapporteur's presentation to the GA.



#### UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) at Glasgow (October-November 2021)

The Special Rapporteur brought to the COP critical messages on how climate change impacts water rights worldwide: lack of availability, presence of drought or flood and socio-economic consequences. All messages are available on the mandate's [youtube channel](#).

In addition, he participated in events and liaised with a wide range of stakeholders and relevant climate change activists and organizations.

Watch here his [speech](#) at the end of the march to Glasgow.



### **High-Level Opening Ceremony of the 4th Global Water Operators' Partnerships (WOPs) Congress (18 October 2021)**

The Special Rapporteur presented his view on the current situation of safe drinking water in the context of COVID 19 and referred to the importance of engaging local, rural, indigenous peoples communities and authorities in water systems to achieve the SDGs. His full presentation can be seen [here](#) from minute 52.50.



### **European Union Conference on water and gender equality (13 October 2021)**

The conference reflected on why water, gender equality, women's rights, and empowerment are intrinsically connected and provided inputs on a call for action to accelerate gender equality in the water domain. In the opening remarks, the Special Rapporteur spoke on unlocking gender equality in water: access to safe water and sanitation for all. His presentation can be seen in this [video](#) from 1.01.



### **Reclaiming public services (26 October 2021)**

Seven global and regional Special Rapporteurs, including water and sanitation, joined this webinar to discuss the crucial moment to build public services as part of COVID 19 recovery and more sustainable and resilient society. Watch the full video of the event.



Mensaje especial de Pedro Arrojo (@SRWatSan), relator especial sobre los derechos humanos al agua potable y al saneamiento #Aguaparalavida @ALCsinhambre @FAOAméricas @FAOMesoamérica @mayenalfredo @LuisLoboG @jajofd @JBerdegueFAO



### Informal Visit to Mexico (8-19 November 2021)

The Special Rapporteur participated in seminars, delivered a conference and met academia, national organizations, the parliament, UN partners, and other relevant stakeholders.

A summary of his conference in ITESO is available [here](#).

The flyer has a blue and white color scheme with a background image of mountains. The main title "5TH HUMAN RIGHTS YOUTH CHALLENGE" is in large, bold, blue letters. Below it, the theme "PEOPLE LIVING CLOSE TO THE NATURE" is written in white. A white box on the right contains submission details: "Submission: 2-5 minute video or other digital content/creation on human rights to water and sanitation of people living close to nature", "Deadline: 15 February 2022 midnight Geneva time", "Who can participate: youth ages between 16 and 24", and "See more: @SRwatsan on Twitter". At the bottom, there is a row of logos for various organizations including UN Women, UNICEF, RIVERS, UN WATER, Franciscan International, ONGAWA, WWF, and RWSA.

### 5<sup>th</sup> Human Rights Youth Challenge (19 November 2021)

On World Toilet Day, the Special Rapporteur launched the 5<sup>th</sup> youth challenge. People from 16 to 24 can send short videos on the right to water and sanitation.

This year's theme is "People Living close to nature".

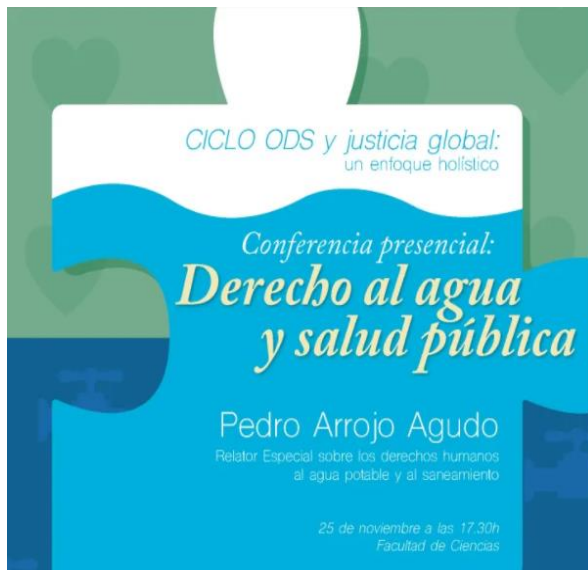
The deadline for submissions is **15 February 2022**.

Find the flyer with all the information [here](#).



### Webinario: Vulneración de los derechos al agua y la alimentación: propuestas desde los territorios. (24 November 2021)

The Special Rapporteur presentation was in the panel on megaprojects and their incidence in human rights, particularly the rights to water and food. **Carlos III University** in Madrid organized the event. Background information [here](#).



### Ciclo ODS y justicia global.

#### Conferencia: derecho al agua y salud pública.

(25 November 2021)

The conference was organized by the Centre for initiatives on cooperation for development based in the University of Grenada. The Special Rapporteur concentrated on making awareness of the linkages between the right to health and water public services, inequality in access to safe water, water privatization, the SDGs and the role of citizens participation and the universities. Background information [here](#)



### Webinar: dialogo biologia del habitat y nueva cultura del agua.

(9 December 2021)

Organized by EcoHabitar and IEB, the dialogue focused on promoting a new culture on water and how it interacts with our biological habitat. The Special Rapporteur dialogued with Petra Jebens-Zirkel, one of the initiators of IEB in Spain. The discussion was held on zoom, and more information is available [here](#) and [here](#).

## Latest News

# Press releases and Statements

4 December:

[35th anniversary UN Declaration on the Right to Development.](#)

2 December:

[International Day for the Abolition of Slavery.](#)

29 November:

[States must prioritize health and equality over profits and vaccine hoarding.](#)

25 November:

[International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.](#)

19 November:

[Honduras: Release Guapinol defenders and honour pledges made to UN.](#)

11 November:

[Joint Statement on the human rights of people affected by dams and other water infrastructure.](#)

20 October:

[Water is not a commodity and financial asset to be exploited.](#)

19 October:

[Joint Statement by independent United Nations human rights experts warning of the threat that financial speculation poses to the enjoyment of a range of human rights.](#)

## Communications **Letters to States**

1 November:

[Communication](#) sent to the State of El Salvador on the Law of Hydric Resources.

27 October:

[Communication](#) sent to the State of Paraguay on water shortcuts and access to safe water during the Covid 19 pandemic.

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Follow the mandate!



The [website of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights](#) remains the number one place to discover the mandate's past and upcoming activities.

The mandate is also present on major social media platforms [Twitter](#) and [Youtube](#) (@SRWatSan), where it actively engages with the global community on issues related to the human rights to water and sanitation.