



COORDINATION COMMITTEE OF SPECIAL PROCEDURES
PALAIS DES NATIONS • 1211 GENEVA 10, SWITZERLAND

www.ohchr.org • TEL: +41 22 917 9000 • FAX: +41 22 917 9008 • E-MAIL: registry@ohchr.org

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Excellency,

I have the honour of writing to you on behalf of the Coordination Committee of Special Procedures and in my capacity as its Chair following the event on special procedures held on 2 September in Geneva.

This event gave me the opportunity to (i) follow-up on my statement of 21 June¹, (ii) provide an update on the implementation of the decisions taken by special procedures during their last Annual Meeting and (iii) explain future plans for continuous improvements in that context.

Several of the decisions adopted last June have already been implemented, such as the fact that communications and press releases are not sent after business hours anymore, except for urgent cases. In this regard, we are also keeping in mind the need to ensure sufficient time for Capitals to be informed of the intention of the mandate holder when it comes to press releases. Significant progress has also been made regarding the timely submission of reports at the current session of the Human Rights Council. All thematic mandate holders have also shared in advance of the session a short document highlighting the main issues raised and the elements on which they would welcome the views of States and other stakeholders.

My colleagues and I also committed to ensure that all end-of-mission statements would be shared with the visited States in advance of their release to the public. We also agreed that social media must be used in a manner consistent with the Code of Conduct and the applicable regulations in the Manual and the country visit terms of reference.

On cooperation, mandate holders are working with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to put in place an enhanced system to record the various status of country visit requests and better assess cooperation on both sides. This will hopefully be operational in the month to come.

I also want to reiterate that there are a complete set of rules and guidelines governing the work of Special Procedures contained in the Code of Conduct, the Manual of Operations and additional guidelines developed over the years. Mandate holders are committed to respect them. The Committee has a facilitation role in this context and is willing to engage with all stakeholders individually or in group as it has done in the last years. The Internal Advisory Procedure offers a more formal channel for complaints. All the details on how to use this

¹https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/SP/AMeetings/26thMeeting/26thAnnualMeeting_Chair_marks21_June2019.pdf

procedure are public and available on our website². Special Procedures, and the Coordination Committee will explore ways to better communicate the use of this procedure and corresponding recommendations and outcomes.

The Committee also has the intention to maintain the practice of having informal conversations with States every six months during its meetings in Geneva.

Special procedures will also continue to address the serious challenges that the system face in terms of global entrenchment of human rights principles and values, attacks against some of our colleagues or attempts to delegitimise the system of special procedures as a whole, persistent lack of cooperation or lack of engagement on our recommendations, the lack of resources or reprisals against those engaging with us.

As announced in June, the Committee will also initiate an update of the Manual of Operations in order to address best practices related to social media, end-of-mission statements, media releases, and other issues that have been brought to our attention by States and other stakeholders. The internal discussion and review among mandate holders has already started.

The Committee has the intention to use its meeting in December to continue consultations with States and all stakeholders on these matters including by benefiting from the expertise of some external experts as appropriate such as former mandate holders, former Chairs of the Coordination Committee or former Presidents of the Human Rights Council. More information about the Committee's work plan post December will be shared with States after we have received input from a variety of experts and stakeholders.

The event on 2 September was also an opportunity to focus on the impact of the work of Special Procedures and share examples in that context. I am very grateful to the panellists and the participants for the richness of the discussion and the stories they shared, which were wide ranging in terms of the many ways our work has made a difference. The meeting and the examples shared will help us better document the various kinds of impact that the work of mandate holders can have at the national, regional and international level and exploring how to maximise it. The information collected up until now shows that the achievements made by special procedures over years are significant and manifold. More positive examples of impact will soon be available on the OHCHR website³.

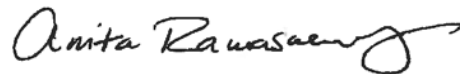
Special procedures and the Coordination Committee are constantly engaging in self-improvement and innovation. We welcome feedback and constructive engagement with all concerned with the ultimate mission of protecting human rights. As I noted in my June and September remarks, we have taken on board suggestions and also reaffirmed our own commitment to improvement. We have heard the comments, concerns, proposals and expressions of support made during the meetings held on 24 May, 21 June and 2 September and will make sure that these will feed their internal discussion and further consultations with stakeholders. My colleagues and I are therefore encouraged by the positive feedback received after my statement of 21 June and the event of 2 September and the readiness expressed to support special procedures in their efforts to preserve and consolidate the system, including its efficiency and independence.

²<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/SP/CoordinationCommittee/Pages/InternalAdvisoryProcedure.aspx>

³<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/SP/Pages/SPGoodStories.aspx>

The Human Rights Council, and the Commission on Human Rights before it, have established independent mandates to assist its efforts to strengthen human rights and to interpret and monitor implementation of this core purpose. Accepting human rights assessment and possible criticism was and still is a sign of maturity and openness to dialogue on human rights issues. Over the years the system of special procedures has benefitted from the support from a variety of stakeholders, in particular States. It continues to be the case as shown by the increased number of States receiving visits of mandate holders, responding to communications or engaging on policy discussions. My colleagues and I will continue to remain available to consider suggestions from all stakeholders and to address them to improve the system. I count on the continued support of all to ensure that special procedures will continue to play their role as an important part of the human rights framework and will continue to inform you regularly on these matters

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Anita Ramasastry". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Anita Ramasastry

Chair of the Coordination Committee of Special Procedures