



Security Council

Distr.: General
31 March 2021

Original: English

Note verbale dated 31 March 2021 from the Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

The Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations presents its compliments to the President of the Security Council and has the honour to transmit herewith a letter from the Chair of the Coordination Committee of the Special Procedures (see annex).

The Permanent Missions of Estonia, France, Ireland, Mexico, Norway, Tunisia and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations kindly request that the present letter and its annex be issued as a document of the Security Council.



Annex to the note verbale dated 31 March 2021 from the Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I am writing in my capacity as Chair of the Coordination Committee of Special Procedures to share information about the work of special procedures mandate holders that may be pertinent to the work of the Security Council.

Special procedures mandate holders have consistently played an important role in prevention and early warning, sounding the alarm on emerging crises, whether thematic or country-specific in nature. Through their role in prevention and early warning, their recommendations for addressing human rights violations in the context of conflict and their advice on integrating a human rights dimension in post-conflict situations, special procedures mandate holders have contributed to crisis prevention, as well as sustaining peace and inclusive development.

The work and recommendations of special procedures mandate holders can give the United Nations useful tools to understand, prevent and respond to crises and prevent their recurrence. The purpose of the present letter is therefore to raise awareness of, and facilitate access to, the information gathered by special procedures mandate holders, ensure that the human rights system is responsive and innovative in confronting challenges in the area of human rights and enhance synergies.

Information about the activities carried out by special procedures mandate holders in 2020 is contained in the annual report on special procedures and its addendum on facts and figures ([A/HRC/46/61](#) and [A/HRC/46/61/Add.1](#)). The report also highlights the contribution of special procedures mandate holders to prevention, peace and security, as well as their engagement with other bodies and entities of the United Nations. The recommendations and conclusions put forward by mandate holders on thematic and country-specific issues in 2020 are also compiled in the relevant report of the Secretary-General ([A/HRC/46/24](#)). These reports are part of the initiatives taken to make the work and recommendations of mandate holders more visible and accessible. The collection of information on the impact of the work of mandate holders has also been enhanced. The “Good stories” webpage has been revamped and is now called “Making a difference” (see <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/SP/Pages/Making-a-difference.aspx>).

The visits of mandate holders to countries in post-conflict, conflict or crisis situations are good examples of their work. Given the constraints imposed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and financial conditions in 2020, the number of country visits of mandate holders was drastically reduced. Mandate holders strongly hope to resume this important part of their work very soon. In parallel, mandate holders have also raised the alarm about urgent thematic issues that may also have an impact on peace and security, such as food and economic crises, migration, climate change and the rise of racism.

Several thematic reports issued in 2020 address topics related to peace and security. For example, in his report ([A/HRC/43/51](#)), the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders analyses the situation of human rights defenders operating in conflict and post-conflict environments. In its report ([A/75/259](#)), 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 examines trends in the use of mercenaries and related actors in the light of changes in the nature of contemporary armed conflicts. In her report ([A/HRC/44/38](#)), the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions examines the ways in which drone attacks pose a fundamental challenge to international legal standards and the institutions established to safeguard peace and security. In addition, in his report ([A/HRC/45/45](#)), the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation

and guarantees of non-recurrence highlights the need for active and multidimensional memory policies in order to respond adequately to past crimes and prevent their recurrence, and, in her report (A/HRC/43/46), the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism focuses on the impact on human rights of policies and practices aimed at preventing and countering violent extremism. Lastly, in its report (A/HRC/44/43), the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises outlines the practical measures that States and business enterprises should take to prevent and address business-related human rights abuses in conflict- and post-conflict contexts, focusing on enhancing human rights due diligence and strengthening access to remedies.

The Secretary-General's call to action for human rights gave important impetus to the integration of human rights throughout the activities of the United Nations. In this call, the Secretary-General refers to the role of human rights mechanisms, including special procedures mandate holders. Mandate holders have therefore engaged with various actors in the United Nations system to ensure that human rights have the place they deserve within the system.

Special procedures mandate holders may interact with the Security Council in various ways, including through participation in Arria-formula meetings, informal meetings or formal briefings. For example, the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism has sustained positive working relationships with the Office of Counter-Terrorism and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate. The Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus and the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights participated in virtual Arria-formula meetings of the Security Council. Most recently, the Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances participated in the monthly briefing of the Security Council on the Syrian Arab Republic, in the context of the tenth anniversary of the conflict.

Mandate holders have also risen to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, they have taken various initiatives demonstrating the importance of human rights to the protection of people during this crisis, as well as the need to work jointly to develop effective responses. They have also provided advice to States and other stakeholders, creating innovative tools and continuing their preventive and monitoring work. Their collective recommendations and action to combat the pandemic, including an informational note and a one-page infographic showing all their activities at a glance, have been compiled and published on a dedicated webpage (see <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/SP/Pages/COVID-19-and-Special-Procedures.aspx>).

The diversity of expertise and engagement represented by special procedures mandate holders offers multiple possibilities for interaction with other bodies of the United Nations, including the Security Council. I trust that the work and recommendations of special procedures mandate holders, as illustrated in the present letter, will give the Security Council useful tools for understanding, preventing and responding to crises and preventing their recurrence. My colleagues and I would be pleased to continue to engage with other parts of the system, including the Security Council, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and our own mandates, and to contribute to enhancing synergies between the human rights pillar and the other pillars of the United Nations.

(Signed) Anita **Ramasastry**
Chair of the Coordination Committee of Special Procedures