



HAUT-COMMISSARIAT AUX DROITS DE L'HOMME • OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

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The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights presents its compliments to all Permanent missions and observers to the United Nations in Geneva and has the honour to transmit hereby a letter from the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights, Ms. Karima Bennoune, inviting them to contribute to a consultation on the impact of fundamentalism and extremism on the cultural rights of women.

The Special Rapporteur will devote her next thematic report to the General Assembly to the above-mentioned issue.

The consultation will provide an opportunity for all interested stakeholders to share their views and experiences with the Special Rapporteur.

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights would be grateful if the submissions could be sent electronically to [srculturalrights@ohchr.org](mailto:srculturalrights@ohchr.org) no later than **19 May 2017**. Kindly limit your responses to 2,500 words and attach annexes where necessary. Please also indicate if you have any objections with regard to your reply being posted on the OHCHR website.

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights avails itself of this opportunity to renew to all United Nations Member States, specialized agencies, intergovernmental organizations, national human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations the assurances of its highest consideration.

10 April 2017



**Mandate of the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights**

10 April 2017

Excellency,

I have the honour to address you in my capacity as the United Nations Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 28/9.

In my last report to the Human Rights Council, I presented an overview of the impact of diverse forms of fundamentalism and extremism on the enjoyment of cultural rights ([A/HRC/34/56](#)). I also indicated my intention to study this issue further for my upcoming report to the General Assembly. This follow up report will focus on the impact of fundamentalism and extremism, as defined in [A/HRC/34/56](#), on the cultural rights of women.

In order to assess the impact of fundamentalism and extremism on women's enjoyment of cultural rights and challenges related to the rights of women to access, take part in and contribute to cultural life, and to contribute to and enjoy the arts and science, I have prepared a call for contributions, which I am hereby sending to States, United Nations agencies, academics and civil society organizations for their consideration. I strongly encourage those making contributions to read my report [A/HRC/34/56](#), as well as the report on the cultural rights of women prepared by the first mandate holder ([A/67/287](#))<sup>1</sup>. I would find it especially helpful if, where necessary, contributors carefully explain the cultural rights impact of any issues they report on.

Contributions would be particularly appreciated on the following issues:

1. The impact of fundamentalism and extremism on women's human rights, with a focus on cultural rights, as guaranteed by Article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights<sup>2</sup> and Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as related concerns arising in regard to the right to education, the right to freedom of opinion and expression, the right to freedom of conscience and religion or belief. How do fundamentalist and extremist ideologies as conceptualized in [A/HRC/34/56](#) limit the opportunities for women to exercise their rights:
  - to access, take part in and contribute to cultural life without discrimination, including having the freedom of movement needed to do so and the right to work;

To all Permanent Representatives  
to the United Nations Office at Geneva

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<sup>1</sup> Both reports are available at [www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/CulturalRights/Pages/AnnualReports.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/CulturalRights/Pages/AnnualReports.aspx).

<sup>2</sup> See also General Comment 21 of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural rights on the "Right of everyone to take part in cultural life", E/C.12/GC/21, 21 December 2009.



- to participate in the development of scientific progress and the arts, as well as to access and enjoy the benefits of their applications;
- to pursue education and
- to take part in the interpretation and development of their culture, including their cultural heritage and practices, at all relevant levels of decision-making and governance?

What are the particular impacts on the rights of diverse women, including girls, women living with disabilities, lesbian, homosexuals, bisexual and transsexual (LGBT), women belonging to indigenous or minority groups, migrant, refugee, and rural women, widows and women living in poverty?

2. Examples of different situations illustrating these matters, which may be included in the report (reflecting geographical diversity, normative and regulatory practices by States / Non-States actors, situations of explicit / implicit and structural limitations, different forms of pressure, including threats and calls for retaliation, discrimination and violence, etc.);
3. Examples of general good practices, whether in the use of existing instruments protecting human rights, including the principle of equality between men and women, or in designing measures to challenge fundamentalist and extremist views, including through strengthening freedom of peaceful assembly and association, education in accordance with international standards, freedom of opinion and expression for all and respect for cultural diversity and cultural rights;
4. Examples of efficient and innovative specific measures and practices aiming at the prevention, protection, reparation and remedy of abuses of the cultural rights of women motivated by fundamentalist and extremist ideologies, including through human and cultural rights education and awareness;
5. Examples (at the local and national levels, both public and in an independent capacity) of any body, that as part of its mandate and in accordance with international standards, undertakes the monitoring of and response to fundamentalist and extremist threats in society, including against women, women's rights and women human rights defenders, as well as any specific mechanisms in place to receive and assess complaints and reports from citizens and civil society organisations, including women human rights defenders, that would raise concerns about fundamentalist and extremist discourses and practices. Where relevant, please include as well examples of measures taken to provide protection and reparation for victims, and any steps taken to ensure that such measures and mechanisms are gender sensitive;
6. Examples of measures your country has taken to respect, maintain and positively value cultural diversity, the universality of human rights and the syncretic nature of culture and religion, including in educational programmes, as specifically relevant to ensuring women's human rights;



7. Examples of measures your country has taken to provide for and protect the separation of religion and State, and guarantee the freedom of religion or belief. Please specify how these measures respect and ensure the rights of women, in particular in regard to fundamentalist and extremist abuses of their cultural rights;
8. Relevant cases of human rights defenders, including cultural rights defenders and women human rights defenders, as well as any person expressing dissent from fundamentalism and extremism who is at risk as a result. Please include measures taken to protect the rights of such persons and support their work defending the cultural rights of women from fundamentalist and extremist movements.

Submissions should be sent electronically no later than **19 May 2017** to [srculturalrights@ohchr.org](mailto:srculturalrights@ohchr.org), using the email title: "Submission to study on impact of fundamentalism and extremism on women's cultural rights". Kindly limit your responses to 2,500 words and attach annexes where necessary.

I wish to thank you in advance for your cooperation and I hope to continue a constructive dialogue on issues related to my mandate.

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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K. Bennoune'.

Karima Bennoune  
Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights