

## Sources of information of the Special Rapporteur

In carrying out her mandate, the Special Rapporteur may request, receive and exchange information from all relevant sources and stakeholders, including, but not limited to States, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, other human rights mechanisms such as special procedures and treaty bodies and other relevant actors representing the broadest possible range of interests and experiences.

## Further information

For additional information on the work of the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights please visit the website of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights: [www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/cultural\\_rights/index.html](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/cultural_rights/index.html)

## Sending information to the Special Rapporteur

All information relevant to the mandate may be brought to the attention of the Special Rapporteur. This includes good practices, thematic studies, as well as information on alleged violations of cultural rights.

Any person or organization can send information to the Special Rapporteur.

If you wish to submit information on alleged violations, please send detailed information to the address below (see **contact**). More information is available on the following website:

[www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/CulturalRights/Pages/Complaints.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/CulturalRights/Pages/Complaints.aspx)

The Special Rapporteur is open to receiving information under any format. You may also use our model questionnaire, available on the website.

## CONTACT

Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights c/o OHCHR-UNOG  
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights 1211 Geneva 10,  
Switzerland

Email : [srculturalrights@ohchr.org](mailto:srculturalrights@ohchr.org)

Fax: +41 22 917 90 06

Tel: + 41 22 917 92 54

Twitter: [@UNSRCulture](https://twitter.com/UNSRCulture)



## Special Rapporteur in the field of Cultural Rights

The Human Rights Council, through resolution 10/23 decided to establish, for a period of three years, a new special procedure entitled “independent expert in the field of cultural rights”. The mandate was extended in 2012, changing the status to **Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights** (resolution 19/6). This mandate was further extended in 2015 for a period of three years through resolution 28/9.

This is one of the various thematic mandates of Special procedures established by the Human Rights Council. It shares with other mandates a common set of methods of work and a code of conduct.

All Special Procedures are assisted by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. **Ms. Karima Bennouna** is the second mandate-holder, following Ms. Farida Shaheed in this position.

## About the Special Rapporteur

**Ms. Karima Bennouna** was appointed as Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights in October 2015. She has worked in the field of human rights for more than 20 years, including with governments and non-governmental organizations, and has carried out field missions, trial observation, election observation and research in many regions of the world. As a Professor of Law and Martin Luther King, Jr. Hall Research Scholar at the University of California-Davis School of Law, she teaches courses on human rights and international law. Her research and writing, including on cultural rights issues, has been widely published and she has frequently commented on human rights issues for the global media. Ms Bennouna has received numerous awards, including the Dayton Literary Peace Prize (2014) for her recent book, “Your Fatwa Does Not Apply Here: Untold Stories from the Fight Against Muslim Fundamentalism.”

## Functions

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Pursuant to Human Rights Council Resolution 19/6, extended through resolution 28/9, the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights is mandated to carry out the following functions:

- To identify best practices in the **promotion and protection of cultural rights** at the local, national, regional and international levels.
- To **identify possible obstacles** to the promotion and protection of cultural rights, and to submit proposals and/or recommendations to the Human Rights Council on possible actions in that regard
- To work in **cooperation with States** in order to foster the adoption of measures at the local, national, regional and international levels aimed at the promotion and protection of cultural rights through concrete proposals enhancing sub regional, regional and international cooperation in that regard
- To study **the relationship between cultural rights and cultural diversity**, in close collaboration with States and other relevant actors, including in particular the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, with the aim of further promoting cultural rights
- To integrate a **gender and disabilities perspective** into her work
- To work in **close coordination, while avoiding unnecessary duplication, with intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations**, other special procedures of the Council and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural rights and UNESCO, as well as other actors representing the broadest possible range of interest and experiences, within their respective mandates, including by attention and following up on relevant international conferences and events.

## Activities

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### ➤ Country visits

The Special Rapporteur conducts on average two official visits to countries per year. These are conducted upon the invitation of the Government concerned, and the Special Rapporteur reports to the Human Rights Council on her findings and recommendations. The main objective of the country visits is to engage proactively with States and other stakeholders so as to enhance the promotion and protection of cultural rights on the ground.

### ➤ Thematic research

The Special Rapporteur presents annual thematic reports to the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly on issues related to her mandate.

### ➤ Communications

The Special Rapporteur receives information submitted from all stakeholders. Information received is used in several activities undertaken by the mandate. Where appropriate, the Special Rapporteur may exchange communications with the concerned governments.

### ➤ Other activities

The Special Rapporteur participates in conferences, seminars, and other events that are relevant to her mandate.

## Issues in Focus

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In her first report to the Human Rights Council, the Special Rapporteur developed preliminary views on the conceptual and legal framework of her mandate. Focusing on the challenges regarding the scope and content of cultural rights, she reviewed the relevant existing provisions in United Nations human rights instruments, and developed her initial thoughts on the interaction among the principle of universality of human rights, the recognition and implementation of cultural rights and the need to respect cultural diversity.

These initial positions have been further developed through the different thematic studies, such as access to cultural heritage, the implementation of the cultural rights of women, artistic freedom, the writing and teaching of history, the right to benefit from scientific progress and its application and the impact of intellectual property regimes on the enjoyment of cultural rights. Learn more under

[www.ohchr.org/en/Issues/CulturalRights/Pages/SRCulturalRightsIndex.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/en/Issues/CulturalRights/Pages/SRCulturalRightsIndex.aspx)

The Special Rapporteur stresses that her mandate is not to protect culture and cultural heritage *per se*, but the conditions allowing all people without discrimination to access, participate and contribute to cultural life in a continuously developing