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Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights



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Note

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Contents

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Introduction	4
II. Activities of the Office of the High Commissioner	5
A. International human rights mechanisms	5
B. Development	7
C. Peace and security	10
D. Non-discrimination	13
E. Accountability	16
F. Participation	17
III. Management and administration	20
IV. Conclusions	21

Chapter I

Introduction

1. The present report, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [48/141](#), contains an overview of the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Geneva, New York and in the field from 1 January to 30 June 2023. The report should be read in conjunction with the annual report of the High Commissioner to the Human Rights Council ([A/HRC/53/17](#)), which contains an overview of the activities of OHCHR from 1 July 2022 to 1 March 2023. As at 30 June 2023, OHCHR had 95 field presences in 89 countries.

2. During the reporting period, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, undertook missions to Austria, Colombia, Ecuador, Haiti, Kazakhstan, the United States of America, Uzbekistan and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). The High Commissioner also visited Ethiopia (engaging with government officials, civil society and the Chairperson of the African Union) and Nairobi, and conducted a mission to Bern. The Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights undertook a mission to Rome and attended the Philea Forum in Šibenik, Croatia; she also visited Bangkok to open a regional seminar and hold meetings with United Nations system entities. The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights and Head of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in New York undertook a mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo; she also undertook missions with high-level engagements in Belgium, Ethiopia, Iceland and Kenya.

3. The progressive lifting of measures to counter the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic throughout the world enabled OHCHR to resume the full scale of its activities, including field missions and in-person activities. OHCHR continued to actively implement its global mandate, including through monitoring and reporting in many countries around the world.

4. In implementing the Secretary-General's call to action for human rights, OHCHR continued to achieve considerable impact, in particular at the country level, in ensuring that the United Nations works as a collective and places people and their rights at the centre of its work. This has been reinforced by the Human Rights 75 initiative, with its main goals being to promote the universality and indivisibility of rights, look to the future and bolster the human rights ecosystem under the leadership of OHCHR.

Chapter II

Activities of the Office of the High Commissioner

A. International human rights mechanisms

1. Treaty bodies

5. During the reporting period, the treaty bodies carried out 69 reviews of State party reports and adopted 200 decisions under individual communication procedures. As at 1 June 2023, 378 State party reports and 1,874 individual communications were pending review. The Committee on Enforced Disappearances registered 1,601 urgent action requests as at 1 June 2023. OHCHR continued working to implement the proposals of the Chairs of the human rights treaty bodies for strengthening the treaty body system (see [A/77/228](#)).

6. On 8 June 2023, the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment held a day of general discussion on draft general comment No. 1 on places of deprivation of liberty. The Subcommittee also visited Kazakhstan, Madagascar and South Africa. The Committee on the Rights of the Child adopted general comment No. 26 (2023) on children's rights and the environment with a special focus on climate change, in May 2023. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women held a half-day of general discussion on draft general recommendation No. 40 on the equal and inclusive representation of women in decision-making systems on 23 February 2023.

7. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights discussed its draft general comment on sustainable development and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on 24 February 2023. During its twenty-fourth session, held in March 2023, the Committee on Enforced Disappearances adopted the first draft of its general comment No. 1 on enforced disappearances in the context of migration.

8. Through its treaty body capacity-building programme, OHCHR supported the engagement between States and the human rights treaty bodies, including Belize, Burundi, Cabo Verde, the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Kyrgyzstan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan, and the State of Palestine.

2. Human Rights Council

9. Through hybrid modalities, OHCHR supported the Human Rights Council in the holding of two regular sessions and the thirty-sixth special session on the human rights impact of the ongoing conflict in the Sudan.

10. The Voluntary Technical Assistance Trust Fund to Support the Participation of Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States in the Work of the Human Rights Council supported the participation of 27 delegates (16 women and 11 men). The Trust Fund organized two in-person induction courses for the delegates prior to the regular sessions of the Human Rights Council.

11. OHCHR continued to provide support to independent investigative mechanisms established by the Human Rights Council, in relation to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Nicaragua, South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, as well as support for the

closure and archiving of information and evidence from the Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Libya.¹

12. As mandated by the Human Rights Council, OHCHR also continued its examination of the human rights situation in Belarus in addition to its accountability work regarding the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Sri Lanka.

3. Universal periodic review

13. OHCHR supported the adoption by the Human Rights Council of the outcomes of the universal periodic review, at its fifty-second session, held from 27 February to 4 April 2023, and the holding of two sessions of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, in January/February and May 2023. The participation of representatives of 104 States in the proceedings was facilitated through the Voluntary Fund for Participation in the Universal Periodic Review. OHCHR also assisted Governments, national human rights institutions, civil society organizations and United Nations country teams in the preparation of reports. During the fifty-second session of the Human Rights Council, a high-level panel discussion was held on the achievements, good practices and lessons learned by the two voluntary funds for the universal periodic review mechanism of the Council.

4. Special procedures

14. OHCHR supported the involvement of 59 special procedure mandates of the Human Rights Council and the Coordination Committee of Special Procedures in various United Nations processes, including those related to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, peace and security, peacebuilding and conflict prevention, and Our Common Agenda. The Office supported the sending of 350 communications and 36 country visits by mandate holders. It also convened the twenty-ninth annual meeting of special rapporteurs, special representatives, independent experts and chairs of working groups of the special procedures of the Council, offering an opportunity for mandate holders to discuss strategic issues and priorities and adopt decisions related to their working methods. OHCHR continued making information on special procedure mandate holders and their achievements more visible, including by publishing more information on their impact. The annual report on special procedures, issued in April 2023,² provides a comprehensive overview of the activities undertaken in 2022.

5. Support for the work of human rights mechanisms

15. The High Commissioner focused his global update to the fifty-third session of the Human Rights Council on cooperation between States and the ecosystem of international human rights bodies, calling upon all to engage with the mechanisms.

16. OHCHR supported the establishment and strengthening of national mechanisms for reporting and follow-up in Djibouti, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Honduras, Kyrgyzstan, Lesotho, Malaysia, Maldives, Mozambique, the Philippines, Sao Tome and Principe and Uzbekistan. The Office also supported States through a regional event in the Middle East and North Africa region. This included the rolling out of the redesigned National Recommendations Tracking Database in four countries. The database is a tool that helps States to manage and track the implementation of recommendations emanating from mechanisms and to prepare reports.

17. OHCHR carried out activities to enhance the engagement of national human rights institutions, parliaments, civil society organizations and United Nations

¹ See www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/co-is.

² See [A/HRC/52/70](#) and [A/HRC/52/70/Add.1](#).

country teams with United Nations human rights mechanisms, and in the implementation of the recommendations emanating from them, including in the Bahamas, Belize, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Djibouti, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Montenegro, Nicaragua, North Macedonia, Panama, Paraguay, Rwanda, Samoa, Somalia, Suriname, Tajikistan, Thailand, Tonga, Tunisia, Tuvalu, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

18. Through the Voluntary Fund for Financial and Technical Assistance in the Implementation of the Universal Periodic Review, OHCHR supported eight States in the implementation of the recommendations, namely the Dominican Republic, Eswatini, the Gambia, Haiti, Kazakhstan, the Marshall Islands, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Tajikistan.

19. Following advocacy by OHCHR, on 24 February 2023, South Sudan took steps to accede to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto, as well as to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.³

6. Humanitarian funds

20. The United Nations voluntary trust fund on contemporary forms of slavery awarded 38 annual grants to assist over 7,700 victims in 32 States, as well as 9 grants under the Special Call for the Sahel region to assist over 5,000 survivors of traditional and descent-based slavery in 4 States. The United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture awarded 184 annual direct assistance grants to assist over 53,000 victims in 90 States, as well as 6 annual capacity-building grants and 6 emergency direct assistance grants. These two funds also received 138 and 309 applications, respectively, for projects to be implemented in 2024, representing a slight increase for the former and a 17 per cent increase for the latter as compared with applications for 2023.

B. Development

1. 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals

21. OHCHR continues to provide country-focused advice to strengthen the integration of human rights and human rights-based approaches into development plans and policies, as part of its efforts towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. From January to June 2023, OHCHR supported United Nations field presences with human rights analyses and advice for 23 common country analyses and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework processes.⁴

22. OHCHR also provided support and guidance on human rights mainstreaming in voluntary national review processes to different stakeholders, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, the Comoros, Maldives,

³ See the statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of South Sudan to the Human Rights Council, March 2023. See also the press statement of the African Union Commission, 26 February 2023, available at <https://achpr.au.int/en/news/press-releases/2023-02-26/african-commission-welcomes-accession-south-sudan-various-regional>.

⁴ Angola, Bahrain, Belize, Burkina Faso, Chad, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gabon, the Gambia, Haiti, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Myanmar, the Philippines, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Rwanda, Saudi Arabia and Tajikistan, as well as the European Union. OHCHR participated in different regional sustainable development forums including panel discussions focusing on the value of placing human rights at the heart of efforts to resume progress on the 2030 Agenda.

23. As the custodian agency for four Sustainable Development Goal indicators, OHCHR reported globally on the killing of human rights defenders, journalists and trade unionists (16.10.1), independent national human rights institutions (16.a.1), the prevalence of discrimination (10.3.1/16.b.1) and the prevalence of the deaths of civilians in conflict situations (16.1.2).⁵ In April 2023, OHCHR held an intersessional meeting of the Human Rights Council on human rights and the 2030 Agenda, following which a resolution⁶ was adopted. In the resolution, the Council underlined the importance of pursuing policies that connect human rights to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and calls for OHCHR to increase technical assistance to States in this critical area.

24. OHCHR co-led, with the International Labour Organization, the work of the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Human Rights, Leave No One Behind and Sustainable Development. The network is actively engaging with United Nations country teams to roll out an online tool and provide technical support on guiding principles such as the human rights-based approach; gender equality and women's empowerment; and leaving no one behind, with a view to addressing inequalities and root causes of discrimination.

25. Jointly with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and the regional commissions, OHCHR organized webinars on Goal 16 indicators in the Middle East and Northern Africa and in Asia. OHCHR also continued to support the work of the task team on non-discrimination and equality of the Praia Group on Governance Statistics.

2. Right to development

26. OHCHR organized the high-level meeting of the Human Rights Council commemorating the thirty-fifth anniversary of the Declaration on the Right to Development, held on 28 February and 1 March 2023.⁷ Also in March, OHCHR supported the mainstreaming of the right to development in several activities of the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. On 18 April, OHCHR collaborated with the University of the Free State, South Africa, to hold a global webinar on the realization of the right to development in Africa. In May, OHCHR co-organized, with the University for Peace, an event on "Good practices in operationalizing the right to development in South-South cooperation".⁸

27. In April, the Office supported the seventh session of the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development held in New York, including discussions on the right to development approach to key topics linked to the 2023 the Sustainable Development Goals Summit and the Summit of the Future, to be held in 2024.

⁵ United Nations, *Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022* (United Nations publication, 2022).

⁶ See Human Rights Council resolution 52/14.

⁷ See the concept note for the high-level meeting, available at www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session52/regular-session.

⁸ See the executive summary of the draft study on the topic, available at www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/development/Draft-Study_Good-Practices-Operationalizing-Right-to-Dev.pdf.

3. International financial institutions

28. In February 2023, OHCHR published the final version of its benchmarking study on the safeguard policies of development finance institutions. OHCHR provided technical advice to the International Climate Initiative of the Government of Germany, helping to develop best practices for aligning the safeguard policy with the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. OHCHR participated in consultations on the revised safeguard policies of the Asian Development Bank. OHCHR continued to support the implementation of its publication *Remedy in Development Finance: Guidance and Practice*, including in connection with the proposed new approach to remedial actions of the International Finance Corporation. OHCHR also contributed inputs to the Secretary-General's policy brief on reforms to the international financial architecture,⁹ in which it underscored, inter alia, the need for transparency and accountability in the reform of global economic governance.

4. Economic, social and cultural rights

29. OHCHR continued to promote and advise relevant stakeholders, in line with the concept of the human rights economy, on integrating economic, social and cultural rights into policymaking in several economic and social sectors. OHCHR engaged with Governments, national human rights institutions and civil society organizations in Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Barbados, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Chad, Colombia, Djibouti, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Jordan, Mexico, Nepal, Serbia, Somalia, the Sudan, Timor-Leste, Uganda, Ukraine, the United Republic of Tanzania and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). Under the Surge initiative, OHCHR rolled out 13 "seeding change" country projects to support system-wide efforts to place human rights at the centre of socioeconomic recovery and build back better. These projects covered a range of rights, in particular, related to health, food, social protection and education.

30. In the Syrian context, OHCHR and the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health organized a round table on 28 April with Syrian civil society, doctors and United Nations agencies to discuss the health-care infrastructure and the impact of the conflict on persons with disabilities and on sexual and reproductive health and rights and to explore avenues for accountability. On 24 May, OHCHR published a report¹⁰ on the right to food based on its study of the conflicts between farmers and herders in Chad.

5. Business and human rights

31. OHCHR launched several resources to help technology companies better understand how to respect human rights. In June 2023, OHCHR organized a multi-stakeholder consultation on gender, technology and the role of business.¹¹

32. The work of OHCHR at the regional and national levels enhanced stakeholders' knowledge and understanding of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, including with respect to conducting human rights due diligence. Following the publication of the High Commissioner's mandated report on Myanmar to the fifty-second session of the Human Rights Council,¹² a private commercial company

⁹ A/77/CRP.1/Add.5.

¹⁰ Étude du Bureau du Haut-Commissariat des Nations Unies aux droits de l'homme, « Le droit à l'alimentation et les conflits agriculteurs-éleveurs au Tchad » (janvier 2023). Available at www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/sdgs/19052023-Rapport-Etude-Droit-alimentation-et-Conflits-Agriculteurs-Eleveurs.pdf.

¹¹ See www.ohchr.org/en/business-and-human-rights/b-tech-project.

¹² See A/HRC/52/21.

announced its decision to suspend all economic engagement with Myanmar. In May 2023, OHCHR hosted a High-level Dialogue between United Nations special procedures, members of Congress and ministers of the Government of Honduras to draft an action plan to address the negative impacts of the existing development models and business projects on human rights and the environment.

33. OHCHR continued to implement the Business and Human Rights – Africa project to advocate for the implementation of business and human rights standards and strengthen accountability. In May, in Mozambique, OHCHR organized a peer-to-peer workshop with private sector representatives, operating in the extractive sector, on the implementation of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights by companies in the country. In Cameroon in June, OHCHR also convened a subregional dialogue for the Central African region on the development and implementation of national action plans on business and human rights, with national dialogues held in parallel in Chad, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda.

6. Environment, climate change and human rights

34. OHCHR worked closely with the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Management Group and others to advance the human right to a healthy environment, in line with the Secretary-General's call to action for human rights and Our Common Agenda at the global, regional and national levels. The Office also participated in a range of environmental discussions, including the most recent climate negotiations. This engagement contributed to more effective and coherent integration of human rights, for example, supporting efforts to protect human rights and civic space in the outcomes of the Bonn climate negotiations; the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change related to the effectiveness and sustainability of rights-based approaches to climate change mitigation and adaptation; and the promotion of the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean, in partnership with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

C. Peace and security

1. Support to peace missions

35. OHCHR continued to support human rights components in United Nations peacekeeping operations and special political missions. Through its strategic engagement with Security Council members and other United Nations entities, OHCHR sought to strengthen or preserve the inclusion of human rights in Security Council resolutions on the mandates of peace operations in Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Iraq, Libya, Mali, Somalia, South Sudan and the Sudan, as well as in Abyei.

2. Human rights due diligence and compliance frameworks

36. OHCHR supported the implementation of the United Nations human rights due diligence policy, including through the provision of advice, advocacy and the strengthening of decision-making and coordination mechanisms at the country level, in United Nations country teams, peacekeeping operations and special political missions. The support was provided in Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eswatini, Georgia, Honduras, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Libya, Mali, Montenegro, Mozambique, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Peru, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South

Sudan, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Yemen.

37. OHCHR continued to implement the African Union Compliance and Accountability Framework project, including through engagement with subregional and national training centres of excellence and other training institutions. The Office also continued its support to the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel during its reconfiguration to implement its human rights and international humanitarian law compliance framework.

3. Prevention, early warning and emergency response

38. OHCHR strengthened its production of human rights-based risk analysis, through improved information management and data analysis capacity. The analysis, which is focused on socioeconomic aspects and discrimination, builds on information from the human rights mechanisms. It forms the basis for strategic engagement in national, regional and global processes, including the Secretary-General's prevention platform and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee.

39. OHCHR continued to support the African Union in integrating human rights into its early warning system. The Office also designed and delivered training modules on integrating human rights into early warning and conflict prevention. In Ethiopia, OHCHR started the process of establishing early warning mechanisms at the community level, in the Afar and Amhara regions.

40. OHCHR deployed surge teams to Antigua and Barbuda, Cambodia, Fiji, Guatemala, Haiti, Peru and the Republic of Moldova. It also deployed surge capacity to the border of the Syrian Arab Republic, to mainstream protection into the earthquake response in the northern part of the country, and to Myanmar. In Fiji, OHCHR contributed to the Vanuatu twin-cyclone response, including a post-disaster needs assessment.

41. OHCHR continued to support a project aimed at strengthening the evidence base for the relationship between human rights and conflict, and to create a pilot conflict risk tool to develop human rights indicators and methodologies for the assessment and use of data in early warning analysis.

42. OHCHR continued to document and verify conflict-related deaths of civilians in 12 of the deadliest armed conflicts. In May 2023, OHCHR recorded the first increase of over 53 per cent in conflict-related deaths of civilians since 2015. In Ukraine, OHCHR published a report on the treatment of prisoners of war, a periodic update in April and a report on conflict-related detentions of civilians in June.¹³

4. Peacebuilding

43. OHCHR strengthened its work supported by the Peacebuilding Fund, which allowed critical activities to be funded. As at 30 June 2023, OHCHR was contributing to the implementation of 21 Fund-supported projects across all regions. In Honduras, OHCHR is implementing two projects aimed at preventing and addressing land and territory-related conflicts through building institutional response capacities and expanding civic space for the participation of youth, Indigenous, peasant, Garifuna and Afro-Honduran communities.

¹³ See www.ohchr.org/en/countries/ukraine.

5. Combating sexual and gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, trafficking and related exploitation

44. OHCHR continued to integrate human rights-based, gender-sensitive and victim-centred approaches within the United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict inter-agency group in (a) the joint assessment of monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements on conflict-related sexual violence in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Somalia and South Sudan; and (b) the work of international investigative bodies regarding Ethiopia and Iran (Islamic Republic of).

45. In Iraq, in May 2023, OHCHR organized an event that brought together key representatives of relevant state authorities to identify gaps that hinder the successful prosecution of criminal violence against women and strategies to enhance coordination among all the relevant entities to ensure accountability for perpetrators of criminal violence against women.

46. OHCHR continued its mandated work on harmful practices, including by presenting reports on forced marriage and witchcraft accusations at the fifty-second session of the Human Rights Council.¹⁴ In the Niger, in March 2023, OHCHR supported the organization of a Forum of the anti-slavery network of the Group of Five for the Sahel, which brought together close to 150 participants from eight countries. OHCHR also supported work of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, in strengthening accountability for conflict-related trafficking.

47. OHCHR continued to follow up on allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse perpetrated by non-United Nations security forces authorized by Security-Council mandates, seeking accountability and assistance for victims. The Office contributed to the integration of a human rights and victim-centred approach in United Nations policies and actions that respond to sexual exploitation and abuse. OHCHR provided training to the inter-agency networks for protection from sexual, exploitation, and abuse in Colombia, Guatemala, Lebanon and Mozambique, and in West Africa.

48. OHCHR deployed a new unit on conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence in Ukraine, with the support of the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict.

6. Humanitarian action

49. OHCHR continued to mainstream a human rights-based approach into humanitarian settings by engaging in protection working groups and protection clusters and with humanitarian country teams in Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Colombia, Ethiopia, Haiti, Honduras, Kyrgyzstan, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, the Republic of Moldova, Somalia, South Sudan, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Yemen and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and in the Pacific. OHCHR leads the protection clusters in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Haiti. The Office hosted a panel discussion on gang violence, humanitarian access and protection challenges at the European Humanitarian Forum in March 2023.

50. OHCHR continued to engage in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, the Global Protection Cluster, the Global Health Cluster and the United Nations COVID-19 Crisis Management Team. The Office contributed to the integration of violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law into the severity tool of the updated Joint Intersectoral Analysis Framework 2.0, which

¹⁴ See [A/HRC/52/47](#).

sets global standards for the estimation and analysis of humanitarian needs and protection risks.

D. Non-discrimination

1. Combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance

51. OHCHR has continued to support the implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent. In February and March 2023, OHCHR convened virtual consultations with civil society activists of African descent from Europe and the Middle East and North Africa regions, including to discuss challenges and experiences with regard to the right to participate in public affairs.

52. In 2023, OHCHR deployed regional advisers to address racial discrimination and the protection of minorities, including people of African descent, in Bangkok, Beirut, Brussels, Pretoria and Santiago. In March 2023, OHCHR supported the launch of the Regional Network for Development and Anti-Racism in the Middle East and North Africa, comprising activists of African descent.

53. In March 2023, in the framework of the Human Rights 75 initiative, the High Commissioner shone a spotlight on racial justice, calling upon States to take concrete steps to tackle persistent and emerging forms of racial discrimination and long-standing human rights violations, including those rooted in legacies of enslavement and colonialism.¹⁵

54. In South Africa, within the framework of celebrations for the national human rights month in March 2023, OHCHR co-organized a national conference on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Constitution. The Office also participated in a panel discussion on reclaiming our shared humanity: protecting human rights by combating racism and xenophobia. In May, OHCHR organized seminars on data collection, monitoring and reporting on cases of discrimination for municipal officials, representatives of the Office for Good Governance and the Ombudsperson Institution in Kosovo.¹⁶

55. Following the launch of the online course entitled “Religions, Beliefs and Human Rights: A ‘Faith for Rights’ Approach”, a series of monthly conversations were organized by Religions for Peace, the University for Peace, the United States Institute of Peace, the United Nations human rights mechanisms and OHCHR. In Ethiopia and Iraq, OHCHR continued to engage with stakeholders to address systematic patterns of violence against ethno-religious groups.

2. Migrants

56. OHCHR released guidance on monitoring and protecting human rights in the context of migration¹⁷ as well as a training guide that aims at including a human rights perspective in migration policies and their implementation.¹⁸ It conducted monitoring missions, including to the Colombia-Panama border, northern Central America, the Costa Rica-Panama border and the Chile-Peru border. OHCHR further advanced

¹⁵ See www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2023/03/concrete-action-needed-end-racial-discrimination-un-human-rights.

¹⁶ References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

¹⁷ See the *Manual on Human Rights Monitoring*, chapter 26, “Monitoring and protecting human rights in the context of migration”. Available at www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/publications/2022-11-14/Chapter26-Monitoring-Protecting-HR-Migration.pdf.

¹⁸ *Towards a Human Rights-Based Approach to Migration: Training Guide* (United Nations publication, 2023).

activities on the human rights protection of migrants in Burkina Faso, Chad, Libya, Morocco, the Niger and Nigeria.

3. Indigenous Peoples and minorities

57. OHCHR provided guidance and/or financial support for the protection of minority groups to national stakeholders and United Nations country teams, including in Argentina, Armenia, Brazil, Cameroon, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Kyrgyzstan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Montenegro, Panama, the Republic of Moldova, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Uganda and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). OHCHR is multiplying efforts to engage China on technical assistance, including on minority rights issues. In early 2023, OHCHR rolled out the guide on protecting minority rights, which was jointly developed with Equal Rights Trust.

58. In the context of its Indigenous and minorities fellowship programmes, OHCHR recruited and placed 32 senior Indigenous and minority fellows in 27 OHCHR field presences, United Nations country teams and the headquarters in Geneva. In June, the Office launched a Portuguese-speaking component of the Indigenous Fellowship Programme.

59. The United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples supported the participation of 145 Indigenous representatives (80 women and 65 men) from 49 countries in various United Nations processes. OHCHR also supported the mandate of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the development of the Global Action Plan of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages for the period 2022–2032.

4. Gender equality and women's rights

60. OHCHR supported the panel discussion on the theme “social protection: women's participation and leadership” at the fifty-third session of the Human Rights Council on 30 June.

61. OHCHR continued to support the work of women human rights defenders in East Africa, by strengthening the East Africa Women Human Rights Defenders Network and its chapters in Ethiopia and the United Republic of Tanzania. In the Occupied Palestinian Territory, OHCHR provided training to the Independent Commission for Human Rights on gender-based discrimination, and OHCHR remained one of the few international actors to carry out visits to women's detention facilities in the West Bank and Gaza.

62. OHCHR worked towards the integration of women's human rights and gender equality in United Nations development and peace and security processes and continued the implementation of its Gender Accreditation Programme aimed at enhancing the integration of gender analysis into all aspects of its work. To date, the Programme has supported OHCHR field presences covering Cambodia, Colombia, Guatemala, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine and the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

5. Persons with disabilities

63. OHCHR provided technical and financial support to Governments and other stakeholder actors in a number of countries on the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities, including on the domestication of international standards.

64. OHCHR prepared a report on support systems to ensure community inclusion of persons with disabilities, including as a means of building forward better after the

COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁹ In February 2023, in the context of the Human Rights 75 initiative, OHCHR also focused attention on establishing care and support systems that are human rights-based, gender-responsive, disability-inclusive and age-sensitive.

65. In Fiji and other Pacific countries, OHCHR published an access audit of all United Nations offices, undertaken with the Pacific Disability Forum. In Somalia and Saint Kitts and Nevis, OHCHR supported national actors in carrying out surveys on the situation and needs of persons with disabilities. In North Macedonia, OHCHR contributed to the development of and consultation process for the National Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2023–2026.

6. Sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics

66. OHCHR continued to advocate for the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and other persons, including through the Free & Equal campaign, technical cooperation, monitoring, reporting and capacity-building.

67. OHCHR supported United Nations entities and civil society organizations, including in engaging with human rights mechanisms and legal reform, in Albania, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Costa Rica, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Dominican Republic, Finland, Ghana, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Lesotho, Liberia, Mongolia, the Niger, Panama, Peru, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Senegal, Slovakia, Timor-Leste, Uganda, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Viet Nam.

68. OHCHR advanced the implementation of the United Nations standards of conduct for business on tackling discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people with the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises, the United Nations Global Compact, the World Economic Forum Partnership for Global LGBTI Equality, the private sector and civil society.

7. Older persons

69. OHCHR continued to influence global debates, contributing to the understanding of the human rights protection gaps concerning older persons and providing support to the mandate of the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons. In May 2023, OHCHR published a briefing paper on the human rights situation of older persons in the context of the armed conflict in Ukraine.

8. Children and youth

70. In the framework of the continued partnership of OHCHR with the Education Above All Foundation and Silatech, the Office's youth rights advocacy toolkit was finalized. The interactive toolkit, developed through six regional consultations with young people and a youth advisory board, is being translated into Arabic, French and Spanish.

71. As part of the Human Rights 75 initiative, OHCHR established a youth advisory group consisting of 12 young human rights activists from different regions. The Group participates in the design, implementation and follow-up of Human Rights 75 activities.

72. In March 2023, the Human Rights Council held its annual discussion on the rights of the child and the digital environment, with the participation of child rights

¹⁹ [A/HRC/52/52](#).

and youth advocates. OHCHR also contributed to the drafting of the guidance note on child rights mainstreaming in the United Nations system.

E. Accountability

1. Transitional justice

73. OHCHR continued to lead, in partnership with the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, the inter-agency revision process of the Secretary-General's guidance note on the United Nations approach to transitional justice.

74. OHCHR provided technical assistance to States and other stakeholders on transitional justice processes, including in Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Colombia, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, El Salvador, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Guatemala, Guinea, Lebanon, Libya, Mexico, Peru, South Sudan, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Yemen, and the Western Balkans region.

75. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, technical support by OHCHR enabled the military justice system to carry out investigations that resulted in the trial of two generals of the Congolese army before the High Military Court of Kinshasa for crimes against humanity by rape. OHCHR also supported the participation of more than 30 rape victims in another trial resulting in the sentencing, in May 2023, of a leader of an armed group in Uvira to life imprisonment. Following advocacy, including by OHCHR, the General Assembly adopted resolution [77/301](#), in which it established the Independent Institution on Missing Persons in the Syrian Arab Republic, to clarify the fate and whereabouts of all missing persons in the Syrian Arab Republic and to provide adequate support to victims, survivors and the families of those missing.

2. Death penalty

76. OHCHR continued advocating for the abolition of the death penalty in all circumstances. It supported advocacy for the abolition of the death penalty in the Central African Republic, Chad, the Niger and Zambia and the abolition of capital punishment for ordinary crimes in Equatorial Guinea. The Office also supported the Secretary-General's advocacy and interventions with regard to individual cases involving the death penalty, including in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

3. Counter-terrorism and prevention of violent extremism

77. OHCHR continued to advocate a human rights-based approach to countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism, and provided technical advice to Member States and United Nations entities, also engaging civil society organizations, including on national policies and legislation. The Office is also finalizing the revision of factsheet No. 32 on human rights, terrorism and counter terrorism to provide practical advice to authorities, practitioners and a variety of stakeholders on effective and human rights-compliant measures to counter terrorism.

78. OHCHR provided technical assistance and participated in several high-level and expert-level briefings to States on the eighth review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, adopted by the General Assembly on 22 June 2023 (resolution [77/298](#)). In January 2023, the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights delivered remarks at the high-level segment of the ninth meeting of the Coordination Committee of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, which focused on "The changing counter-terrorism landscape and evidence-based/data-centric responses to the threat".

79. OHCHR carried out a two-day consultation with the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf to share best practices and advice in implementing recommendations of the universal periodic review aimed at ensuring respect for and application of human rights-related principles when combating terrorism.

4. Administration of justice and law enforcement

80. OHCHR continued to monitor, train and advise members of State institutions and other actors to strengthen the administration of justice and the rule of law, including in Belize, Cambodia, the Central African Republic, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Georgia, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Kenya, Libya, Mali, Mozambique, Mexico, North Macedonia, Peru, South Sudan, Tunisia, Thailand, Uruguay, Uzbekistan and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). In Belize, OHCHR provided technical assistance to the Police Department, including with the organization, from 8 to 12 May 2023, of training workshops for senior officers on the human rights-based approach to policing. In Honduras, OHCHR provided assistance for development, adoption and implementation of a new legal framework for the election of Supreme Court judges. In Mozambique, OHCHR supported the legalization and revision of cases through a mobile court mission in a conflict area, in which 93 cases were reviewed, resulting in 23 arbitrary detentions legalized and 20 persons tried.

81. In Haiti, Honduras, Liberia, South Sudan, Tunisia and Yemen, OHCHR advised authorities and monitored the conditions of detention. In Yemen, detention facilities in Aden and Hadramout were monitored in March and May 2023, followed by advocacy with the authorities to improve the situation. OHCHR continued to advocate the release of two detained United Nations staff members by the Houthis since November 2021.

5. Human rights and drug policy

82. In line with the United Nations system common position on drug-related matters, OHCHR continued advocating the decriminalization of the use of drugs for personal use. In collaboration with the Global Commission on Drug Policy, OHCHR organized a high-level event in Geneva on taking a human rights-based approach to drug policy. OHCHR provided support for taking human rights-based approaches to drug policies in Colombia and the Philippines.

6. Corruption and human rights

83. OHCHR strengthened its engagement with relevant stakeholders to promote anti-corruption efforts. The Office became a member of the Steering Committee of the Global Network for Anti-Corruption, Transparency and Accountability in Health. OHCHR continued to ensure that policies, laws and responses were victim-centred and consistent with human rights obligations, such as in the Niger and Sri Lanka. OHCHR is also carrying out research and analysis, using case studies, addressing the negative impacts of corruption on human rights, with a focus on prevention, effective administration of justice and redress for the victims of human rights violations.

F. Participation

1. Enhancing and protecting civic space and people's participation

84. OHCHR supported efforts to ensure the meaningful, inclusive and safe participation of non-governmental organizations in various United Nations processes, including in the work of human rights mechanisms and the General Assembly.

85. OHCHR reinforced its monitoring capacity with respect to civic space related issues. The Office worked with Dataminr to develop an artificial intelligence model that captures the data necessary to detect attacks on human rights defenders. On 30 May 2023, OHCHR released a report on the human rights impacts of new technologies on civic space in South-East Asia.²⁰

86. The Office supported the work of human rights defenders, including in Brazil, Chad, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Guatemala, Honduras, Liberia, Libya, Mexico, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Peru, Rwanda, Togo, the United Republic of Tanzania and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). Together with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the Office is developing actions to enhance the United Nations system-wide accountability and response for the protection of women human rights defenders in conflict-affected countries.

87. OHCHR organized training workshops on the safety of journalists for over 11 United Nations country teams and trainings on digital protection and security, risk assessment, and self-protection for women human rights defenders, journalists and civil society in Iraq, Libya, Myanmar and Thailand. In March, in cooperation with the National Council for Human Rights in Egypt, OHCHR organized a training on using a human rights approach in media and journalistic work in Cairo for 25 journalists. Also in March, OHCHR published a report on freedom of expression in Yemen.²¹

88. OHCHR continued to support the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights in her role as the senior United Nations official designated by the Secretary-General to lead United Nations efforts to prevent and address intimidation and reprisals against those who cooperate with the United Nations, including by engaging with States and providing guidance to the United Nations system on the issue.

2. Digital space

89. As part of the implementation of the Road Map for Digital Cooperation and the call to action for human rights, OHCHR continued to develop guidance for United Nations entities on human rights due diligence and the impact of digital technology. OHCHR intensified its advocacy for rights-based online content governance by engaging with States and technology companies, including on the basis of the High Commissioner's report on the right to privacy in the digital age.²²

90. OHCHR convened an expert consultation, in February 2023, to discuss the relationship between human rights and technical standard-setting processes for new and emerging digital technology. The discussion, the first of its kind mandated by the Human Rights Council, brought together standard-setting bodies, companies, civil society and other experts to explore how to integrate human rights concerns into technical standard-setting processes.

3. Electoral processes

91. OHCHR monitored human rights and conducted related advocacy in the context of electoral processes, including in Cambodia, Cuba, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominica, Fiji, the Gambia, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Libya, Montenegro, Mauritania, Sierra Leone and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). In

²⁰ Available at <https://bangkok.ohchr.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/OHCHR-TECHCS-SEA2023.pdf>.

²¹ Available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/country-reports/yemen-freedom-expression-may-2021-december-2022>.

²² A/HRC/51/17.

Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone, OHCHR deployed surge teams to monitor the electoral processes from a human rights perspective. OHCHR also provided training courses on human rights standards, early warning and reporting in the context of elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Maldives and Thailand. In Honduras, with support from the Peacebuilding Fund, OHCHR assisted the Office of the Attorney-General with the development of a manual and protocol on the investigation of electoral violence.

4. Support for national human rights institutions and regional mechanisms

92. OHCHR assisted with the establishment or strengthening of national human rights institutions in Australia, Bahrain, Belgium, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Cameroon, Canada, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Cook Islands, Costa Rica, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, El Salvador, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Honduras, India, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Kuwait, Lesotho, Liberia, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Montenegro, Morocco, Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, Poland, the Russian Federation, Rwanda, Samoa, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, South Sudan, Thailand, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe, and the State of Palestine, as well as in Kosovo. In Samoa, OHCHR collaborated with the national human rights institution to engage with the Government to apply a human rights-based approach to climate change-related actions. OHCHR organized the fellowship programme for staff of “A” status national human rights institutions with the participation of the institutions in El Salvador, Georgia, Kenya and Malaysia.

93. OHCHR organized the fellowship programme for staff members of regional human rights organizations which enabled staff of the African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights, the East African Court of Justice and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to gain experience in the United Nations human rights system and to enhance cooperation among these mechanisms and with OHCHR.

5. Human rights education

94. The work of OHCHR on human rights education focused on youth, in line with the World Programme for Human Rights Education. The Office supported the integration of human rights education into events, including by reaching out to thousands of Scout educators and young Scouts. OHCHR is finalizing a multimedia package featuring documentaries on the work of young human rights educators from Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Morocco, Samoa, Serbia and South Africa; the package, developed in partnership with Amnesty International and Soka Gakkai International, will be launched on Human Rights Day 2023.

Chapter III

Management and administration

95. Achieving greater diversity in the workforce continues at pace with overall gender parity achieved for staff in the Professional and higher categories. Efforts are being made to ensure progress towards equitable geographical distribution and greater regional group diversity to improve the representation of unrepresented and underrepresented Member States.

96. OHCHR updated its risk treatment and response plans for 2023, reviewed the human rights risk, which was included in the revised Secretariat-wide risk register, and contributed to the Board of Auditors report and the management letter identifying the Office's areas for improvement in risk management.

97. OHCHR launched a project to delegate authority to field offices to process transactions in Umoja for the following modules: procurement, travel management, asset management and implementing partner management. This delegated authority will provide field offices with the flexibility and autonomy to make decisions closer to the populations they serve while ensuring increased accountability and financial stewardship of their resources.

98. The office is embarking on a digital transformation project to enhance accessibility, efficient data management and real-time monitoring. This transformation will lead to more effective and transparent work and improved stakeholder engagement.

Chapter IV

Conclusions

99. The human rights challenges facing the world are multifaceted and interconnected, requiring global solutions and stronger international cooperation. The repercussions from the climate crisis are intensifying and growing more widespread, with a severe impact on populations affected by poverty, ongoing conflict, violence, displacement and humanitarian crises.

100. While the road to recovery from the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic remains difficult, States must build economies that advance human rights in a sustainable manner. This can only be achieved by investing the maximum available resources towards social protection, universal education and health care, food security, proper housing, and by addressing the root causes of inequality, injustice and discrimination.

101. Acts of religious intolerance in different forms and the lack of respect for the freedom of religion and belief of others, are increasing in many parts of the world. They cause dangerous divisions and mistrust between communities and countries.

102. Gender-based discrimination and stereotypes remain deeply entrenched in our societies, compounded by significant pushback on the rights of women and girls. Every effort must be made to uphold the rights of women and girls and advance their full and equal participation in all aspects of life. The rising trend of attacks on the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons as well as the increase in anti-migrant, racist and xenophobic sentiments and narratives, only exacerbate violence, stigmatization and discrimination, leading to further divisions. In addition, civil society space continues to shrink worldwide, with a high number of human rights defenders threatened, harassed, tortured and killed, for merely exercising their rights.

103. While connectivity remains a challenge for a large segment of the world's population, there has been rapid progress on the digital front. This progress comes with grave risks if its human rights implications are not properly assessed and addressed, including thorough regulation that is human rights-compliant.

104. Solutions to these great challenges lie with human rights, as the best prevention tool available. Human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated. They are the foundation for peace and development and must be fulfilled by States in an equal manner and for all people without discrimination.

105. In 2023, marking the seventy-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, it is crucial to showcase the transformative power of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which provided concrete measures to guide countries towards stability, prosperity and peace in the aftermath of the Second World War, and build on the achievements made since then.

106. Through its Human Rights 75 initiative, OHCHR seeks to promote the universality and the indivisibility of human rights, to look to the future and to bolster the human rights ecosystem, in 2023 and beyond.

107. The Office will continue to amplify and engage strategically with the human rights mechanisms, ensure the integration of their work and assessment into analysis, programming and advocacy at the country and regional levels, as well

as at headquarters, and explore how to better utilize the mechanisms' outreach and recommendations in prevention and protection and in sustaining peace, development and security.

108. OHCHR continues to play a crucial role in promoting and protecting human rights across the globe, in partnership with States, national human rights institutions, civil society, international organizations and other stakeholders. These partnerships are key and should be further strengthened. The Office also supports the mainstreaming of human rights within the United Nations system, rendering it more coherent and effective in addressing the complex challenges facing the world. The growing demand for the Office's engagement, including for technical cooperation by States and for support and assistance by mechanisms of the Human Rights Council, reflects its relevance and impact in advancing human rights for all.

109. OHCHR responds to these demands as effectively as possible, within limited resources and capacity. The Office continues to evaluate its work and has embarked on an organizational change programme to accelerate progress in fulfilling its potential and build an OHCHR fit for the future. This programme incorporates the commitment of OHCHR to integrating the Secretary-General's quintet of change and will reinforce the High Commissioner's ability to achieve results that have a positive impact on the human rights of all people across the world.

110. The High Commissioner deeply appreciates the support of States for the work of the Office. Despite being the third pillar of the United Nations, human rights work remains significantly underfunded. OHCHR requires more resources and much greater political support to meet the increasing challenges facing the world.

111. The High Commissioner urges States to recognize the value of investing in human rights by providing the Office with resources commensurate with its global mandate to address gaps identified at the national, regional and global levels in the area of human rights.

