



General Assembly

Distr.: General
14 June 2022

Original: English

Human Rights Council

Fiftieth session

13 June–8 July 2022

Agenda item 2

**Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner
for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the
High Commissioner and the Secretary-General**

Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*

* The present report was submitted after the deadline in order to reflect the most recent information.



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 and New York and in the field from 1 July 2021 to 15 March 2022. As of March 2022, OHCHR had 103 human rights field presences worldwide. The adjusted length of the reporting period is the result of the change in the annual programme of work of the Human Rights Council.¹ The report should be read in conjunction with the report of the High Commissioner to the General Assembly,² which contains an overview of the activities of OHCHR from 1 January to 30 June 2021.

2. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic presents an ongoing challenge of unprecedented proportions to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, demonstrating the fragility of development processes when not anchored in human rights. The increasingly divergent recovery, coupled with the shrinking of civic space in many countries, is an alarming trend. In the context of the pandemic, OHCHR has emphasized that human rights provide a comprehensive blueprint for a sustainable recovery, as echoed in the Secretary-General's "Call to Action for Human Rights"³ and in his report "Our Common Agenda":⁴ the Office has called for a shift towards an economic model that enhances human rights.

3. While the COVID-19 pandemic continued to affect the way OHCHR was able to deliver on its mandate during the reporting period, the Office adapted to the constraints by using different modalities, including the increased use of online monitoring tools and hybrid conferencing.

4. Since mid-2021, OHCHR has supported the effective use of human rights mechanisms to solve pressing political, social and economic challenges and has continued to support the continuous functioning of United Nations human rights mechanisms in the discharge of their mandates in remote and hybrid formats during 26 sessions, resulting in the review of 45 State party reports, including ways to avoid gaps in the protection of human rights. In addition, the Office has taken initiatives to better link human rights mechanisms with other processes in support of activities to prevent human rights abuses, protect human rights and sustain peace, sustainable development and peace and security.

5. OHCHR has promoted human rights standards in the responses of Member States to the COVID-19 pandemic in order to ensure an effective and inclusive recovery, including through thematic guidance notes, advocacy, technical cooperation and experience sharing, working in close cooperation with governmental entities, national human rights institutions, civil society organization and United Nations actors. In particular, OHCHR led recovery needs assessments, identifying gaps in human rights protections so as to leave no one behind in COVID-19 response plans and to strengthen the integration of economic and social rights, including from a macroeconomic perspective. OHCHR contributed human rights analysis and advice to United Nations common country analyses and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks, as well as to national development processes.

6. OHCHR continued to prioritize the implementation of the Secretary-General's "Call to Action for Human Rights", including ensuring system-wide responsibility for human rights, and the imperative need to step up human rights integration at the country level. The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights has worked closely with the Under-Secretary-General for Policy in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General to lead the operationalization of the Call to Action. Significant progress has been made to translate its vision and core principles into tangible action. The Call to Action has brought the United Nations system together in seven thematic areas and has generated genuine commitment across United Nations entities, which have developed tools, guidance and advocacy designed to advance policy coherence and concerted action at the country level. In collaboration with

¹ See statements of the President of the Human Rights Council [PRST OS/13/1](#) and [PRST OS/14/1](#).

² [A/76/36](#).

³ See <https://www.un.org/en/content/action-for-human-rights/index.shtml>.

⁴ See <https://www.un.org/en/content/common-agenda-report/>.

the Executive Office, OHCHR continued to support inter-agency efforts to ensure that field offices are adequately supported and equipped to advance the implementation of the Call to Action, focusing on identifying concrete actions to address the most critical human rights issues and to positively impact peoples' lives. OHCHR continued to conduct outreach to Member States, civil society organizations and other stakeholders to raise awareness and to maintain the momentum towards the implementation of the Call to Action, in particular with regard to the synergies between the Call to Action and Our Common Agenda.

II. Activities of the Office

A. International human rights mechanisms

1. Treaty bodies

7. Until September 2021, the 10 treaty bodies supported by OHCHR had to perform their mandated work online and were thus unable to meet for their full scheduled meetings. In addition to the challenges this posed to the participation of States parties and stakeholders, it led to an increase in the backlog of reports of States parties pending review as at 15 March 2022 (to 434), largely exceeding the working capacity of the treaty bodies.

8. During the reporting period, the Committee on Migrant Workers adopted general comment No. 5 (2021) on migrants' rights to liberty, freedom from arbitrary detention and their connection with other human rights and the Committee on the Rights of the Child adopted general comment No. 25 (2021) on children's rights in relation to the digital environment, addressing the impact of the pandemic. The Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment resumed in situ visits with a mission to Brazil and the Committee on Enforced Disappearances carried out its first country visit, to Mexico.

9. Grants through the Special Fund established by the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment were awarded to 16 torture prevention projects implemented by national prevention mechanisms and non-governmental organizations in 12 States.

10. The OHCHR capacity-building programme supported the engagement of several States and other stakeholders with the treaty bodies and held the first regional consultations to foster exchanges of good practices from national reporting and follow-up mechanisms.

2. Human Rights Council

11. Through virtual and hybrid modalities, OHCHR supported the Human Rights Council in the holding of three regular sessions, three special sessions (on serious human rights concerns, including the situation in Afghanistan, the human rights implications of the ongoing situation in the Sudan and the grave human rights situation in Ethiopia) and an urgent debate on the situation in Ukraine. OHCHR continued to support the efforts of the Presidency of the Human Rights Council to implement existing efficiency measures adopted by the Council.

12. 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 19 delegates (11 women and 8 men) in the sessions of the Council. In December 2021, the Fund organized a virtual workshop for countries in the Asia-Pacific region, as well as online induction courses.

13. OHCHR supported investigative and accountability mechanisms established by the Human Rights Council, with mandates on Belarus, Ethiopia, Libya, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in Israel, as well as the mandate of the team of international experts on the situation in the Kasai region of the

Democratic Republic of the Congo, which was extended to include the entire country.⁵ The staffing of those bodies has been affected by the complex financial situation of the Office as part of the Secretariat. In February 2022, OHCHR supported the establishment and the first session of the new International Independent Expert Mechanism to Advance Racial Justice and Equality in Law Enforcement.⁶

3. Universal periodic review

14. OHCHR supported the adoption by the Human Rights Council of the outcomes of the universal periodic reviews held in July and September 2021 and March 2022 and the meetings of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review held in a hybrid format in November 2021 and January 2022. The Voluntary Fund for Participation in the Universal Periodic Review facilitated the participation of 52 States in the proceedings. The Voluntary Fund for Financial and Technical Assistance in the Implementation of the Universal Periodic Review supported technical cooperation activities in 21 States. OHCHR assisted Governments, national human rights institutions, civil society organizations and United Nations country teams in the preparation of reports for the universal periodic review process, including in Brazil, Burundi, Haiti, Honduras, Liberia, the Niger, Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, the United Republic of Tanzania and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

4. Special procedures

15. OHCHR supported the involvement of 58 special procedures and their coordination committees in United Nations processes, including those relative to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, on peace and security, peacebuilding and prevention, as well as to the Call to Action for Human Rights and Our Common Agenda. OHCHR supported mandate holders in resuming all mandated activities in person, in particular country visits. An overview of the activities and achievements of mandate holders can be found in a recent report of the Human Rights Council.⁷ OHCHR continued compiling examples to illustrate the changes brought about through the activities of the special procedures and presented a study illustrating the contributions of the special procedures to efforts to prevent human rights violations and abuses.⁸

5. Follow-up to the work of human rights mechanisms

16. Cooperation continued with Member States and United Nations entities to incorporate the recommendations of universal periodic reviews into efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, including through the publication on practical guidance on the use of the universal periodic review provided by OHCHR,⁹ available in all languages, and a new repository of United Nations good practices on how the universal periodic review process supports sustainable development, produced jointly by OHCHR and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).¹⁰ In addition, OHCHR, in close cooperation with the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the International Organization of la Francophonie, worked to strengthen the capacities of members of parliaments to engage in all stages of the universal periodic review process.

17. During the reporting period OHCHR led capacity-strengthening activities to enhance the engagement of national human rights institutions, members of parliament, civil society organizations and United Nations country teams with United Nations human rights mechanisms, including activities in Brazil, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, Ethiopia, El Salvador, Honduras, Madagascar, Mozambique, Panama, Trinidad and Tobago, South Sudan, the Sudan and Suriname, and held the first regional consultations with Member States in the Middle East and North Africa region. In addition, the Voluntary Fund for

⁵ See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/co-is>.

⁶ Resolution 47/21.

⁷ See A/HRC/49/82 and A/HRC/49/82/Add.1.

⁸ A/HRC/48/21.

⁹ See

https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/HRBodies/UPR/UPR_Practical_Guidance.pdf.

¹⁰ See https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/UPR_good_practices_2022.pdf.

Financial and Technical Assistance in the Implementation of the Universal Periodic Review supported the establishment of a national mechanism for reporting and follow-up in Brazil and the drafting of a national human rights action plan in Guyana.

18. OHCHR supported the work of the General Assembly, in particular through the work of the Third Committee, at its seventy-sixth session: the Committee considered 92 reports prepared by OHCHR and held 67 interactive dialogues with human rights mechanisms, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the President of the Human Rights Council.

6. Humanitarian funds

19. Under the 2022 call for applications, the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery awarded annual grants for 43 projects to assist 17,000 victims in 33 States and the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture awarded annual grants for 188 projects to assist 47,000 victims in 91 States.

B. Development

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

20. In the context of the setbacks brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, OHCHR increased its country-focused advice to strengthen the integration of human rights and human rights-based approaches to development, drawing on the 2030 Agenda. OHCHR also supported United Nations field presences with human rights analytical content, including policies, for 61 common country analyses and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework processes for greener and more inclusive recoveries.¹¹ OHCHR also provided support to the voluntary national review processes in several countries, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, El Salvador, Eswatini, Guinea-Bissau, Jamaica, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Tuvalu.

21. OHCHR employs and has disseminated the summary issued by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs on knowledge exchange on approaches and tools for voluntary national reviews,¹² including the integration of human rights, in Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, Guinea-Bissau, Jordan, Rwanda and Saudi Arabia.

22. OHCHR and UNDP launched a joint project to strengthen the capacities of United Nations country teams and national human rights institutions to implement the Sustainable Development Goals and to prevent human rights abuses, including the production of disaggregated indicators and data on marginalized and vulnerable groups. OHCHR also promoted exchanges on good practices and supported the signing of memorandums of understanding between national human rights institutions, national statistics offices and other relevant stakeholders in Albania, Jordan, Mongolia, the Philippines and the Republic of

¹¹ In the Asia-Pacific region: Bangladesh, Fiji, India, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam; and the Pacific multi-country regional assessment (this is an assessment of 12 additional island countries, not counting Fiji and Samoa, namely, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu). In the Europe and Central Asia regions: Albania, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. In the Latin American and Caribbean region: Belize, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Costa Rica, Chile, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of); and the Caribbean multi-country analysis [2]. In the Middle East and North Africa region: Algeria, Egypt, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. In the West Africa and Central Africa regions: Benin, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Nigeria, Niger and Senegal. In the Southern Africa and East Africa regions: Burundi, Botswana, Eritrea, Kenya, Lesotho, Mauritius, Mozambique, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

¹² See https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/27069Knowledge_Exchange_Booklet_2021_VNR.pdf.

Moldova, adding to memorandums of understanding already signed in Kenya, Liberia, Mexico and Uganda, as well as in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as well as Kosovo.¹³

23. OHCHR trained United Nations custodian agencies and regional statistical commissions and collected examples of good practices to generate measurable change and increase understanding of the cross-cutting nature of Sustainable Development Goals 10 and 16 with regard to all of the Sustainable Development Goals. OHCHR has piloted a survey initiative on Goal 16 in Cabo Verde, El Salvador, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Somalia, Togo, Tunisia and the United Republic of Tanzania. This tool, developed in collaboration between the Government of El Salvador, UNDP, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and OHCHR, collects data on 13 Goal 16 indicators on thematic areas of governance, access to justice, discrimination, corruption, violence and trafficking in persons.

2. Economic, social and cultural rights

24. OHCHR continued its engagement with authorities and relevant stakeholders, promoting and advising on integrating human rights in economic policies in order to help Member States tackle inequalities and address human rights gaps as part of efforts to build back better from the COVID-19 pandemic. With expanded economic expertise under its surge initiative, OHCHR provided human rights-based analyses of macroeconomic and fiscal policies and public budgets in more than 15 countries to assist with context-specific options for expanding fiscal space and maximizing available resources for economic, social and cultural rights, including support for the efforts of Governments to adopt human rights-based socioeconomic response plans. Particular focus was placed on social protection and universal health coverage, key elements of a new social contract rooted in human rights called for by the Secretary-General in Our Common Agenda. OHCHR advocated for universal and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines as a global public good, including sharing good practices on social protection measures that benefit the most marginalized populations.

25. OHCHR engaged in critical technical assistance in areas such as health, housing, water and sanitation, food and social protection in Azerbaijan, Burundi, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jordan, Mexico and Serbia. This included individual income-generating activities and support for the creation of cooperatives in Burundi and the documentation of emblematic cases in Mexico. OHCHR co-led inter-agency efforts to address ageism and age discrimination under the framework of the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021–2030). In cooperation with UN-Water, OHCHR led the development of a road map to strengthen the integration of human rights into water and sanitation initiatives.

26. OHCHR strengthened its engagement with local governments and networks, including by formalizing its cooperation with the United Cities and Local Governments organization to further leverage the role of cities and local governments in advancing human rights.

3. Right to development

27. OHCHR carried out research, produced reports and tools, built capacity and advocated for the right to development as part of its activities to address the inequalities and asymmetries between countries in COVID-19 preparedness, response and recovery.¹⁴ The Office's advocacy focused, inter alia, on international cooperation and solidarity, vaccine multilateralism, sustainable finance, fiscal and policy space, debt relief, illicit financial flows, technology transfer and integrating the right to development into climate action.

¹³ All references to Kosovo should be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

¹⁴ See <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Development/Pages/InformationMaterials.aspx>; <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Development/Pages/DevelopmentIndex.aspx>; <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Development/Pages/intro-training-on-rtd-and-sdgs.aspx>; and <https://www.uceap.org/departments/e-course-on-the-right-to-development>.

28. The High Commissioner called for urgent action on debt management and debt relief, in order to provide countries in debt distress with the necessary fiscal space to maintain essential services, and advocated for the introduction of a temporary waiver of relevant intellectual property rights under the Agreement on the Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights until the COVID-19 pandemic is contained in order to promote access to medicines for all.

29. In 2021, OHCHR held Hernán Santa Cruz dialogues on the contribution of development to human rights in Guinea (July) and on interlinkages between the right to development and the right to a healthy environment in the Latin America and Caribbean region (December).¹⁵

30. In addition, OHCHR organized the Social Forum (October)¹⁶ and a meeting on mutually beneficial cooperation (March),¹⁷ at which the call of the High Commissioner that COVID-19 recovery must be grounded in human rights, including ensuring universal and equitable access to vaccines, and that the pursuit of economic interests should not trump health rights was reiterated. The Office contributed to the fifteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development¹⁸ and promoted inclusion of the right to development, human rights and gender equality in the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries adopted at the fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries.

4. International financial institutions

31. OHCHR worked in partnership with multilateral development banks, their independent accountability mechanisms and civil society to strengthen the operational policies, reprisals procedures and accountability processes of the banks. OHCHR contributed to positive results in four significant operational policy review processes, including a new set of rules and procedures for the independent accountability mechanism of the African Development Bank and a training session for the Inter-American Development Bank (December). In February 2022, OHCHR launched its publication *Remedy in Development Finance: Guidance and Practice*, and is advancing towards its implementation phase.¹⁹

32. OHCHR engaged with the Inter-American Development Bank and monitored human rights risks and impacts of investment projects supported by development finance institutions in Colombia and Honduras.

5. Business and human rights

33. OHCHR guidance shaped policy design and practice, including on accountability policies of development finance institutions. OHCHR engagement with technology companies and key stakeholders through its Business and Human Rights and Technology Project enhanced exchanges, capacities and awareness on the application of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights in internal policies and practices. OHCHR country engagement increased uptake of the principles, including in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Liberia, Mexico, Panama and Peru, including by Governments, businesses, national human rights institutions, civil society and communities. In addition, multi-stakeholder dialogue has been fostered thanks to the annual global forum in Geneva and four regional forums on business and human rights, convened by the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises, which is supported by OHCHR.

¹⁵ See <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/ESCR/Pages/hernan-santa-cruz-dialogues.aspx>.

¹⁶ See <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Poverty/SForum/Pages/SForum2021.aspx>.

¹⁷ See <https://hrcmeetings.ohchr.org/HRCSessions/RegularSessions/49session/Pages/Panel-discussions.aspx>.

¹⁸ See <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Development/Pages/TradeandInvestment.aspx>.

¹⁹ See <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-03/Remedy-in-Development.pdf>.

6. Environment, climate change and human rights

34. OHCHR carried out research on human rights, COVID-19 responses and climate finance, engaged in negotiations of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and supported the work of the entities of the United Nations system on the protection of environmental human rights defenders, including in Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia, Honduras and Mexico, as well as in the Asia-Pacific region, where OHCHR, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and civil society organizations co-organized the first Asia-Pacific Environmental Human Rights Defenders Forum (November 2021). At the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, OHCHR launched a report on the human rights links between climate change and migration in the Sahel.²⁰ In addition, OHCHR engagement in negotiations on article 6 contributed to the inclusion of human rights in the text of the Paris Agreement rulebook.

C. Peace and security

1. Support for peace missions

35. OHCHR supported human rights components in peace missions, including training on conflict-related sexual violence for the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (November 2021), as well as the meeting of senior women protection advisers on sharing lessons learned and good practices on gender-sensitive and victim-centred accountability processes and on reparations for conflict-related sexual violence. OHCHR participated in the independent evaluation of the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) and strengthened the consideration of human rights in United Nations peace operations. In this regard, following OHCHR advocacy, the Security Council, in its resolution 2612 (2021) on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, acknowledged transitional justice as integral to peace and security processes in the country.

2. Human rights due diligence and compliance frameworks

36. OHCHR provided technical assistance on human rights to military and/or police authorities and personnel in Haiti and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). In addition, OHCHR supported the consistent implementation of the human rights due diligence policy, including through the adoption and operationalization of policy procedures in Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ethiopia, Georgia, Montenegro, Peru, the Republic of Moldova, the Republic of North Macedonia, Serbia, Somalia, South Sudan, the Sudan and Ukraine, as well as Kosovo. In December 2021, the European Union and the United Nations signed an agreement to support the African Union in the implementation of its framework to ensure that African Union peace support operations comply with international human rights and humanitarian law and conduct and discipline standards. OHCHR ensured that human rights remain a priority in the mandatory training materials for more than 75,000 military and police personnel in United Nations missions and trained more than 500 mission leaders, senior officers and peacekeeping trainers. OHCHR also continued to support the joint force of the Group of Five for the Sahel in implementing its human rights and international humanitarian law compliance framework.

3. Prevention, early warning and emergency response

37. OHCHR established three additional Emergency Response Teams in its regional offices in Central America, South America and Central Africa. In addition, the Office strengthened its prevention activities through enhanced open-source analysis, data provenance assessments and technological capacity to absorb, process and link data from various sources. OHCHR continued to integrate human rights into the continental early warning system operated by the African Union.

²⁰ See <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/HR-climate-change-migration-Sahel.pdf>.

38. The prevention of genocide and other atrocity crimes remain a priority in OHCHR advocacy.²¹ OHCHR held consultations and contributed to the report of the Secretary-General on current system-wide delivery, financing of and existing gaps in technical assistance and capacity-building efforts that support the implementation by States of their international human rights obligations and commitments. The report provided recommendations on the way forward in the prevention of genocide and other atrocity crimes.

4. Peacebuilding

39. OHCHR strengthened areas of work supported by the Peacebuilding Fund. As of early 2022, OHCHR has approximately 20 ongoing projects supported by the Fund across all regions, including on: public policy development for consolidation of peace and sustainable development; strengthening capacities of civil society actors, in particular women and youth; supporting national actors in the implementation of transitional justice processes and accountability mechanisms; and preventing social unrest and related violence in the electoral context. OHCHR continued to be a part of the United Nations Initiative for Peace Consolidation in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, which has contributed to inter-agency engagement on human rights, institutional strengthening, prevention of conflicts and promotion of dialogue.

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

40. OHCHR continued strengthening the capacity of women's organizations and key stakeholders on sexual and gender-based violence, strategic litigation on sexual and reproductive rights and access to justice and human-rights based investigations of gender-related killings in Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Libya, Mali, Mexico and Paraguay and in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. In Haiti, OHCHR developed an analysis of protective measures to address sexual violence related to gang criminality against women and girls in marginalized areas of Port-au-Prince. In the Plurinational State of Bolivia, OHCHR contributed to the work of the gender committee of the judiciary, including efforts to prevent political violence, and prepared a study on the state of women in detention.

41. In Ethiopia, OHCHR led a joint investigation with the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, leading to findings that all parties to the Tigray conflict committed serious human rights violations and abuses, including sexual violence.

42. OHCHR continued integrating human rights, gender-sensitive and victim-centred approaches within the United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict, including on the joint assessment of the monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements on conflict-related sexual violence. OHCHR documentation and analysis contributed to the report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence.²² OHCHR analysis also contributed to the report of the Secretary-General on women and girls who become pregnant as a result of sexual violence in conflict and children born of sexual violence in conflict.²³ In January 2022, the High Commissioner addressed the Security Council open debate on the violence, intimidation and reprisals faced by women participating in peace processes.

6. Humanitarian action

43. OHCHR continued integrating human rights as an element in United Nations operations in humanitarian settings, including those related to COVID-19, in countries in Africa, the Americas, and the Middle East and North Africa and the Asia-Pacific regions.

44. OHCHR continued engaging in the work of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, the Global Protection Cluster, the Global Health Cluster and the United Nations COVID-19 Crisis Management Team. It also contributed to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's guidance on bureaucratic and administrative impediments to humanitarian action, research

²¹ [A/HRC/48/39](#) and [A/HRC/48/42](#).

²² [S/2021/272](#).

²³ [S/2022/77](#).

on collaborative advocacy by humanitarian and human rights actors, the review of the Committee's protection policy and the implementation of the Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights in crisis contexts.

45. OHCHR participated in humanitarian planning exercises, including the humanitarian planning cycle, in more than 17 countries and in the 2022 Global Humanitarian Overview. The capacity of OHCHR to engage in humanitarian action was strengthened through an online training course for its staff, including lessons learned from COVID-19 response and recovery efforts. OHCHR and the Asia-Pacific Forum enhanced the capacities of national human rights institutions in the region on humanitarian action through the piloting of an online training programme.

D. Non-discrimination

1. Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance

46. OHCHR formulated a four-point agenda towards transformative change for racial justice and equality to address systemic racism and violations of international human rights law against Africans and people of African descent by law enforcement agencies.²⁴ Wide-ranging consultations informed the preparation of the 20 recommendations contained in the agenda and its follow-up. OHCHR monitored and provided technical support to authorities, civil society organizations and media professionals for the prevention of and response to hate and discriminatory speech in Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and Brazil.

47. OHCHR commemorated the twentieth anniversary of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action²⁵ and supported consultations for the establishment of the Permanent Forum of People of African Descent,²⁶ as well as the election and appointment processes of its members at the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council. Through its fellowship programme for people of African descent, OHCHR empowered 18 fellows to effectively engage with the United Nations human rights system and to promote human rights in their communities.

2. Migrants

48. OHCHR provided technical advice, developed guidance and built capacities on key migration and human rights issues across the Americas, including in Chile, Haiti, Mexico and Trinidad and Tobago, as well as in the Niger and in Thailand and other countries in Southeast Asia. In addition, OHCHR led a monitoring mission at the Poland-Belarus border,²⁷ documented lethal disregard for the rights of Libyan migrants at sea, including forced expulsions,²⁸ and the impact of COVID-19 on human rights in Libya²⁹, as well as climate-related migration in the Sahel.³⁰ OHCHR enhanced support for implementation and review of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, including through consultations with relevant stakeholders, including national human rights institutions and parliamentarians. OHCHR also contributed to the new protocol on migrants adopted by the Ibero-American Federation of Ombudspersons.

49. OHCHR, in collaboration with the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, published a trainer's guide on human rights at international borders,³¹ and undertook high-level dialogues and training workshops for border officials in Mauritania, Morocco, Thailand

²⁴ Resolution 43/1, [A/HRC/47/53](#) and the conference room paper on the promotion and protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of African descent against excessive use of force and other human rights violations by law enforcement officers (available at https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Racism/A_HRC_47_CRP_1.pdf).

²⁵ General Assembly resolution 76/1.

²⁶ General Assembly resolution 75/314.

²⁷ See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/2021/12/press-briefing-notes-polandbelarus-border>.

²⁸ See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/stories/2021/11/report-highlights-unsafe-and-undignified-expulsion-migrants-libya>.

²⁹ See https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Migration/A_pandemic_of_exclusion.pdf.

³⁰ See <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/HR-climate-change-migration-Sahel.pdf>.

³¹ See https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/HR_InternationalBorders.pdf.

and countries in Central Asia. OHCHR enhanced its efforts to reshape harmful narratives against migrants at the global and field levels through its Stand Up for Human Rights campaign and its related toolbox “#StandUp4Migrants”, which includes podcasts, comics and photo essays.³²

3. Discrimination on the basis of indigenous or minority status

50. OHCHR provided guidance and delivered training on anti-discrimination, minority and indigenous peoples rights to national authorities and United Nations entities in Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Madagascar, Mexico, Montenegro, Paraguay, Peru and the Republic of Moldova. In the Republic of Moldova, OHCHR contributed to the establishment of a mediation institution for the Roma community and provided training for the mediators. OHCHR engagement with the relevant authorities of Honduras enhanced the protection of several peasant and indigenous communities in the context of forced evictions. In follow-up to the “Faith for Rights” framework, OHCHR and the European Commission held a series of peer-to-peer learning events to mobilize religious actors to work for gender equality.

51. OHCHR enrolled 26 indigenous senior fellows and 21 senior fellows from minority communities in 41 countries in a job-shadowing training programme, in which the fellows were assigned to United Nations field presences, including OHCHR regional and country offices.

4. Gender equality and women’s rights

52. OHCHR continued its technical assistance and capacity-building work on gender equality, including in the Republic of North Macedonia, where OHCHR supported the development of a gender equality law and strategy. OHCHR also provided technical advice to enhance investigation protocols for gender-related killing of women in Chile and Honduras. In the Sudan, OHCHR strengthened the capacities of the unit of the Ministry of Social Development that address violence against women and girls. In Paraguay, a guide on how to apply a gender perspective to judicial decisions was published and the capacities of judges were strengthened.

53. OHCHR advocated and provided guidance on human rights standards on sexual and reproductive health and rights, including on the decriminalization of abortion in Mexico. OHCHR developed a training package for health workers on stigma-free health services for sexual and reproductive health and HIV services, which was piloted in December 2021 in Uganda with the assistance of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the Ministry of Health.

54. Through its Gender Accreditation Programme, OHCHR further enhanced its field capacities to integrate a gender analysis into its monitoring, reporting, programmatic and advocacy work. Subsequent to their participation in the programme, the human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine and OHCHR-Colombia achieved the highest level of accreditation. OHCHR Guatemala and the Syrian Arab Republic have been selected for the third round of the programme.

5. Persons with disabilities

55. In August 2021, OHCHR, in collaboration with the International Paralympic Committee, launched the “#WeThe15” campaign, which reached all regions of the world and achieved extensive coverage. OHCHR also disseminated tools to identify and combat discrimination based on disability in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

56. OHCHR advocacy contributed to the ratification by the Republic of Moldova of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in November 2021. OHCHR also provided technical support for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities into the legal systems of Brazil, Georgia, Guatemala, Malawi, Mozambique and Ukraine, including its application in legal proceedings. The human

³² See <https://www.standup4humanrights.org/migration/en/index.html>.

rights monitoring mission in Ukraine conducted monitoring visits to more than 50 long-term care facilities and psychiatric hospitals. In Chile, OHCHR provided technical support for the creation of a protocol on maternity for women with disabilities.

6. Sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics

57. OHCHR continued advocating for the human rights of LGBTIQ+ persons through the United Nations Free & Equal campaign. OHCHR also supported and advised national stakeholders on LGBTIQ+ rights in Albania, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Cabo Verde, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ghana, Honduras, Liberia, Mongolia, Panama, Peru, Serbia, Timor-Leste, Ukraine, Uruguay and Viet Nam. The Office has also developed guidance on legal gender recognition and provided support to the offices of resident coordinators.

58. In Liberia, OHCHR provided support to the Independent National Commission on Human Rights and the LGBTIQ+ community, including a three-day working session, which increased knowledge on prevailing forms of discrimination and violence and protection mechanisms. A common platform was created to flag cases of violence to the Independent National Commission on Human Rights and Government institutions.

7. Older persons

59. OHCHR continued its advocacy regarding the protection of the human rights of older persons, including in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. OHCHR elaborated an analysis of normative standards and obligations existing under international law, highlighting gaps and the need for a better implementation of existing norms and standards and the accelerated development of a new normative instrument on the human rights of older persons.³³

8. Children and youth

60. In November 2021, OHCHR, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and UNEP launched the publication *Principles and Policy Guidance on Children's Rights to a Safe, Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region*, including a child-friendly version. On International Youth Day, 170 young leaders from Colombia, Guatemala and Mexico shared their experiences in advancing the right to food and sustainable development during an online event co-organized by OHCHR and other United Nations entities.³⁴

61. OHCHR promoted the human rights for young people in vulnerable situations through a partnership with Education Above All and the Silatech Group and advocated for a child-sensitive strategy on family reunification.³⁵ The Office also advocated for the participation of youth and children at the intergovernmental level to shape the discussions and for their recommendations to be considered. OHCHR, UNICEF, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict will be holding consultations throughout 2022 with civil society organizations and children on the development of a United Nations-wide guidance note on the mainstreaming of child rights.

9. Persons with albinism

62. OHCHR conducted research on the impact of the COVID-19 on the enjoyment of human rights by persons with albinism, identifying key actions to ensure that they are not left behind in COVID-19 response and recovery policies, including protection, meaningful participation and inclusion, non-discrimination, accountability and data collection. Key outcomes were presented in the report of the Secretary-General on the social development challenges faced by persons with albinism.³⁶

³³ A/HRC/49/70.

³⁴ See <https://bit.ly/3Bbhxv5>.

³⁵ A/HRC/49/31.

³⁶ A/76/769.

E. Accountability

1. Transitional justice

63. OHCHR provided technical assistance to relevant State institutions and key stakeholders, including support for the design and implementation of inclusive, context-specific and victim-centred transitional justice processes and strengthened protections for the participation of victims in such processes, including in Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, El Salvador, Guatemala, the Gambia, Kenya, Lebanon, Madagascar, Mexico, the Republic of Korea, South Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic. In the Syrian Arab Republic, OHCHR advocated for the establishment of an independent mechanism on missing persons, with the effective participation of victims and relatives in consultation with other relevant actors.³⁷ In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office assisted the elaboration and operationalization of a decree on the establishment of a truth, justice and reconciliation commission in the central Kasai region and supported the development of a national strategy on transitional justice through wide and inclusive national consultations. In Mexico, OHCHR provided advice in the establishment of the Truth Commission to investigate the grave human rights violations perpetrated against political dissidents between 1965–1990, which was created in October 2021.

2. Death penalty

64. OHCHR continued advocating for a moratorium on the use of the death penalty and for its abolition, including in Liberia, the Niger and the United States of America, as well as in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. In countries that retained the use of the death penalty, OHCHR continued to advocate for the protection of the rights of those facing capital punishment, paying special attention to persons under age 18 at the time of the offence and persons with psychosocial or intellectual disabilities, and to the human rights implications resulting from the lack of transparency with regard to the use the death penalty.³⁸

3. Counter-terrorism and prevention of violent extremism

65. OHCHR continued to advocate for a human rights-based approach to countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism and provided technical advice on national policies and legislation. OHCHR contributed to key global policy developments, including the seventh review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (June 2021), at which language on civic space, children's rights, women's rights and gender equality was strengthened.³⁹ In addition, as Chair of the Working Group on Protecting and Promoting Human Rights, the Rule of Law and Supporting Victims of Terrorism at the meeting of the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, OHCHR spearheaded the development of the *United Nations Basic Human Rights Reference Guide on the Proscription of Organizations in the Context of Countering Terrorism* (June 2021). OHCHR also played a leading role in integrating human rights and gender perspectives into the Global Framework for United Nations Support on Syria/Iraq Third Country Returnees, co-led by UNICEF and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, notably on the humanitarian and protection needs of returnees, as well as accountability and security concerns.

4. Administration of justice and law enforcement

66. OHCHR continued to monitor, advocate, train and advise State institutions and other national stakeholders to foster accountability and strengthen the administration of justice and the rule of law, including relative to remote hearings, in Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Burundi, Chad, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Haiti, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, the Niger, Peru, the Republic of Korea, South Sudan and Uruguay. OHCHR trained officials of the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Unification of the Republic of Korea in the documentation and preservation of evidence of crimes against humanity in the

³⁷ See General Assembly resolution 76/228.

³⁸ [A/HRC/48/38](#).

³⁹ General Assembly resolution 75/291.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea. In Kenya, OHCHR supported the development of guidelines on the investigation and prosecution of violations by law enforcement officers. In Burundi and Mali, OHCHR provided guidance on the right to fair trial in the revision of military justice code and related policies. In the Plurinational State of Bolivia, OHCHR supported the judicial reform initiative led by the Ministry of Justice, including on reparations. In Haiti, OHCHR continued monitoring conditions of detention and provided recommendations to authorities. OHCHR and UNODC provided technical support in the development of the new prison policy in Ecuador, including ways to address overcrowding. In Mexico, OHCHR promoted the work of the Extraordinary Forensic Identification Mechanism, which is intended to address the current forensic crisis of more than 52,000 unidentified deceased persons.

5. Human rights and drug policy

67. OHCHR continued advocating for the decriminalization of use of drugs for personal use and addressed prison overcrowding, in line with 2018 United Nations common position on drug-related matters. In September 2021, OHCHR cooperated, with the Governments of Germany and Switzerland and with UNDP, UNAIDS and other partners to organize the third regional implementation dialogue on the International Guidelines for Human Rights and Drug Policy for States and other stakeholders in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia regions. OHCHR continues to engage with the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

F. Participation

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

68. OHCHR supported human rights defenders through capacity development and its work with a number of networks, including the Pacific Human Rights Defenders Network and networks of women human rights defenders in the East Africa region, including Ethiopia and the United Republic of Tanzania. OHCHR contributed to protection strategies for women defenders in the context of the 2022 elections in Kenya and designed a course for human rights defenders in coordination with the University of the South Pacific.

69. OHCHR continued documenting attacks against defenders and journalists, offline and online, worldwide. OHCHR is leading a pilot project in South-East Asia to map and document online violence against human rights defenders. In addition, OHCHR issued the first regional report on the right to freedom of association in the Middle East and North Africa, including trends, challenges and good practices.⁴⁰ As a co-lead entity of the Generation Equality Forum Action Coalition on Feminist Movements and Leadership, OHCHR is committed to enhancing its support for feminist movements and women human rights defenders in order to accelerate gender equality and promote civic space.

70. OHCHR, under the Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights, led United Nations efforts to make civil society participation more inclusive and safer. OHCHR and the Inter-Parliamentary Union have strengthened their cooperation through a memorandum of understanding. In Chile, OHCHR prepared information materials on international human rights norms relevant to the constitutional review process.

71. By supporting the Secretary-General and the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, OHCHR continues to lead United Nations efforts to prevent and address intimidation and reprisals against those who cooperate with the Organization, including by engaging with Member States and providing guidance to the entities of the United Nations system on the issue. In September 2021, the annual report of the Secretary-General to the Human Rights Council reported on global trends as well as allegations of reprisals against some 240 victims and human rights defenders in 45 countries for cooperating with the United Nations.⁴¹

⁴⁰ See http://romena.ohchr.org/en/FoA_MENA.

⁴¹ A/HRC/48/28.

2. Digital space

72. As part of the implementation of the Secretary-General's Road Map for Digital Cooperation and his Call to Action for Human Rights, OHCHR continued to develop guidance for United Nations entities on human rights due diligence and the human rights impact of digital technologies. OHCHR intensified its advocacy for rights-based online content governance, including by directly engaging with Member States and information and communication technology companies.

73. OHCHR advocated for human rights-based regulations, bans and moratoriums on certain uses of artificial intelligence, including in the context of online content moderation. The report of the High Commissioner on artificial intelligence⁴² was instrumental in fostering engagement with key actors, including Member States, the European Parliament, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the media and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. The High Commissioner also denounced rights-violating surveillance carried out by government authorities and called for a moratorium on the sale and export of spyware until adequate domestic and international safeguards are in place.⁴³

3. Electoral processes

74. OHCHR monitored human rights and conducted related advocacy in the context of electoral processes in Chile, Colombia, the Congo, Ecuador, the Gambia, Honduras, Mexico, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Zambia. OHCHR also provided technical assistance to State institutions and civil society on early warning and monitoring. In Honduras, OHCHR implemented monitoring strategies with an emphasis on early warning and prevention. OHCHR published its first handbook on human rights and elections,⁴⁴ providing a comprehensive overview of applicable human rights norms and standards.

4. Support for national human rights institutions and regional mechanisms

75. OHCHR continued strengthening the capacities of national human rights institutions, including in Algeria, Brazil, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Burundi, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Lesotho, Mexico, the Niger, Panama, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). In Algeria, OHCHR contributed to the strengthening of the capacities of the national human rights institution and the national statistics office in the area of human rights and the Sustainable Development Goal indicators. OHCHR continued advocating for the establishment of a national human rights institution in Lesotho. OHCHR also supported the national human rights institution in Mali through an exchange of visits with the national human rights institution of Côte d'Ivoire in October 2021 and the development of a new database. OHCHR strengthened capacities of European national human rights institutions on a human rights analysis of COVID-19 national recovery plans. In Uruguay, OHCHR supported the national human rights institution through the organization of a cycle of five public dialogues on the impacts of COVID-19 on human rights.⁴⁵ OHCHR also supported the operationalization of national preventive mechanisms in Burundi and the Niger.

5. Human rights education

76. OHCHR continued leading human rights training sessions and education cooperation activities on human rights with universities and institutes, including in Liberia, Mexico and the Niger. In September, OHCHR organized a high-level event, at which delegates to the

⁴² [A/HRC/48/31](https://www.ohchr.org/en/48/31).

⁴³ Council of Europe, speech of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 28 March 2022 (available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/2021/09/committee-legal-affairs-and-human-rights-parliamentary-assembly-council-europe-hearing>).

⁴⁴ See <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/Human-Rights-and-Elections.pdf>.

⁴⁵ See <https://www.gub.uy/institucion-nacional-derechos-humanos-uruguay/comunicacion/noticias/culmino-ciclo-dialogos-inddhh-derechos-humanos-tiempos-pandemia>.

Council acknowledged the role of human rights education in the building of more equitable, sustainable and inclusive societies that are resilient in the face of crises. OHCHR continued to implement the educational youth programme of the World Programme for Human Rights Education and in February 2022 published, jointly with Equitas, a publication entitled *Bridging our Diversities: A Compendium of Good Practices in Human Rights Education*.⁴⁶

III. Conclusions

77. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, including the Omicron surge, was a defining characteristic of the reporting period, setting back efforts towards a better recovery and further exacerbating the severe consequences of the pandemic on human rights. Humanity faces the challenges of learning the hard lessons the pandemic is teaching us and how to build rights-respecting societies that will be more resilient to the present crisis and to future crises. At the same time, the substantial economic impacts of the pandemic, the necessity to respond to climate change and the global consequences of ongoing conflicts, including in Ukraine, pose enormous constraints on the ability of the global community to move forward in addressing these challenges.

78. Most dangerous of all, current threats have intensified demands for a retreat from multilateralism. The popular appeal of this insular approach is understandable, but it is a self-defeating strategy: global challenges require global solutions.

79. Human rights – as a universal concept – responded to the horrors of the Second World War and to the demand that such horrors would never be repeated. Since that time, the human rights framework has been further developed and implemented, instrumentalized, politicized – and misused. Yet the concept of human dignity and the profound belief that all people are born free and equal has survived and even flourished. The fundamental tenet is a touchstone that is more relevant than ever today.

80. Investing in human rights requires efforts that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights continues to encourage and to sustain. The Office plays an indispensable role in mainstreaming human rights within the United Nations, making the United Nations system stronger and more effective. The relevance of the work of OHCHR is reflected in the growing demands for its engagement across a full spectrum of human rights needs. States continue to demonstrate their confidence in the Office's work, and to request greater technical cooperation and support. The Human Rights Council pursues a growing range of thematic and country-related initiatives, and depends on OHCHR to staff and support those efforts.

81. OHCHR responds to these demands as effectively as it can, continually stretching its limited resources to address its burgeoning tasks. The Office continues to reassess and evaluate its work with the aim of achieving results that have a positive impact on the human rights of people in their daily lives. In that regard, in extending its management plan through 2023, the Office has maintained its overall strategic direction, while placing additional emphasis on areas that are particularly relevant. These include addressing inequalities and leveraging data to promote and protect human rights and the situation of people of African descent.

82. The work of the Office to ensure that human rights are integrated fully into pandemic recovery efforts remains essential, with stronger engagement both on economic and social rights and on the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. Because the pandemic has set back gender equality and pushed people who were already marginalized further behind, the engagement of OHCHR in accelerating progress to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will also continue to intensify.

83. The High Commissioner appreciates the support of Member States for the work of her Office, and for their trust, as reflected in its growing workload. Investment in

⁴⁶ See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/publications/training-and-education-publications/bridging-our-diversities-compendium-good-practices>.

human rights is an investment in our shared prosperous and peaceful future, and human rights work remains substantially underresourced. The High Commissioner encourages Member States to respond to the importance of investing in human rights by allocating resources that match the challenges being faced at the country, regional and global levels and through their support to OHCHR.
