



COORDINATION COMMITTEE OF SPECIAL PROCEDURES  
PALAIS DES NATIONS • 1211 GENEVA 10, SWITZERLAND

www.ohchr.org • TEL: +41 22 917 9000 • FAX: +41 22 917 9008 • E-MAIL: registry@ohchr.org

21 April 2021

Dear Members of the Consultative Group,

On behalf of the Coordination Committee of Special Procedures, I am writing to you in connection with the selection of new mandate holders, in particular the selection of several of our future colleagues at the upcoming session of the Human Rights Council in June. As you have just commenced this important task, I would like to assure you of the full support of the Committee. As with your predecessors, the Committee would be happy to meet with you at a mutually convenient time to exchange views on good practices for the identification of a broad range of suitable candidates for mandates, and the selection process itself.

The high quality and integrity of mandate holders are crucial to ensure the effectiveness and credibility of the system of special procedures. I recently invited the relevant outgoing mandate holders to provide information on the skills they consider essential for the new mandate holders to discharge the mandate. I sought their views in line with Human Rights Council resolution 5/1, paragraph 51, which says that “the Consultative Group should take into account, as appropriate, the views of stakeholders, including the current or outgoing mandate-holders, in determining the necessary expertise, experience, skills, and other relevant requirements for each mandate”.

I am therefore pleased to share with you the contributions received from the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of human rights by persons with albinism (Annex I), the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences (Annex II), the Working Group on enforced and involuntary disappearances (Annex III) and the Working Group of Experts on people of African descent (Annex IV).

I trust that you will find these suggestions useful as you undertake the selection process. I am at your disposal to discuss this matter further if you have additional questions or require additional feedback. This letter will also be posted on the public website of special procedures. I wish you success in your deliberations.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anita Ramasastry".

Anita Ramasastry  
Chair of the Coordination Committee of Special Procedures

cc: H.E. Ms. Nazhat Shameem Khan  
President of the Human Rights Council

## Annex I

### CONTRIBUTION FROM THE INDEPENDENT EXPERT ON THE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS BY PERSONS WITH ALBINISM

#### Essential Qualities

The following qualities are fundamental:

1. **Significant Experience Building Coalitions at the National Level:** This is crucial for this mandate whose focus should be on implementing existing norms to respond to attacks and other human rights violations against persons with albinism. It is also important for providing follow-up support to Member States after a country visit.
2. **Research and Professional Report Writing in Albinism:** Demonstrated experience publishing significant work on albinism generally, as well as on albinism and human rights /albinism and social science. (In this latter regard, experience in albinism research solely in the context of the natural sciences should not be considered as this approach to albinism could be highly problematic in destigmatizing the condition in certain countries).
3. **Knowledge in & Experience of International Human Rights Standards:** Demonstrated knowledge and experience with international human rights standards and how these apply to persons with albinism. Demonstrated knowledge of the multiple and intersecting discrimination they face. Familiarity with, at least, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Preferably knowledge and experience with other relevant Treaties including the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, and the foundational treaties: The Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as well as the Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights.
4. **Knowledge of the Regional Action Plan/Plan of Action on Albinism in Africa:** Demonstrated knowledge of the Regional Action Plan on albinism (2017-2021) and the Plan of Action on Albinism in Africa (2021-2031).
5. **Knowledge of Albinism Worldwide:** Some degree of knowledge about albinism and human rights outside of the Africa region.
6. **Consultative Approach:** Solid understanding of the need to consult persons with albinism, their family members, experts on the condition from various fields as well as other relevant stakeholders in government and non-governmental organizations, worldwide, irrespective of language and geographic barriers.
7. **Advocacy Skills:** Demonstrated ability and willingness to engage Member States and Civil Society in both formal and informal ways to drive cooperation with the mandate. Demonstrated ability to engage the media to demystify albinism, raise awareness on the condition and on human rights in general across a diversity of media platforms.

## Desirable Attributes

The following qualities are preferred but not essential:

1. **Personal Connection:** The ideal candidate should have albinism or should have an established connection to the condition either through familial relationships or through significant research on the issues within a human rights-based framework.
2. **Male Candidate is appropriate:** At this time, it is appropriate to consider a man for this position, to create the opportunity to demystify albinism across genders (given that the previous Independent Expert was a woman). Moreover, due to past emphasis on protection of women with albinism, attacks on men with albinism have increased significantly over the last two years.
3. **Experience with Youth:** Experience working with youth in Africa including those with albinism of all genders. Africa has a very high population of youth. These need to be engaged creatively to bring an end to the harmful practices faced by persons with albinism in the region.
4. **Resource Mobilization Skills:** Experience engaging the private sector. Demonstrated ability to forge partnerships in implementing the mandate and creatively finding resources to support activities targeted at addressing the urgent parts of the mandate particularly ending attacks and other forms of violence targeting persons with albinism.

## Other Comments

### Independence

The attribute of independence, which is essential to the work of the mandate-holder, would have to be considered in light of the following matters peculiar to this mandate:

1. Persons with albinism are a small number relatively speaking.
2. Due to their minority status and years of marginalization, an overwhelming majority are not in academia or other positions of privilege that would typically suit or more readily support the position of a mandate holder.
3. Many persons with albinism who have the essential and desired experience to be a mandate-holder are linked in some capacity to an albinism advocacy group.

The implication is that the Consultative Group would have to:

1. Apply a degree of flexibility when assessing the element of independence in the shortlisted candidates while at the same time not compromising the importance of the element. Some tools for this balancing act include the following:
2. The shortlisted candidates should be asked to, where applicable:
  - a. Outline in writing how they intend to avoid conflicts of interests.

- b. Enter an undertaking that once on the mandate, if their job circumstances change for any reason, this ought to be immediately relayed to the OHCHR senior support team or the Coordination Committee for assessment.
- c. Enter an undertaking to consult with the OHCHR senior support team when organizing public events or receiving funds from third parties to ensure that there are no actual or perceived conflicts of interests.

## Annex II

### CONTRIBUTION OF THE SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, ITS CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

The mandate on violence against women, its causes and consequences is 26 years old. It has consistently adopted a human rights approach to violence against women and girls with a focus on States' responsibility to prevent and combat gender-based violence against women and girls. During its first 15 years, the mandate was involved in pioneering work in relation to standard setting on all forms of violence against women, including the development of a framework for model legislation on domestic violence (E/CN.4/1996/53/Add.2). Over the following 15 years, the mandate focused on implementation strategies for an effective implementation of the international and regional commitments in this area and contributed to its further understanding.

Over the last six years, the mandate has also focused on new or less visible manifestations of violence against women, such as online violence, violence against women during childbirth or obstetric violence, violence against women in politics, violence against women journalists, rape as a crime and human rights violation. It has sought to provide States and other stakeholders with tools to implement existing standards, such as the General Assembly resolution on gender-related killings of women, through the mandate's Femicide prevention Watch initiative and Model Legislation on Rape.

The mandate has also sought to increase collaboration among UN and regional independent expert mechanisms on women's rights and violence against women through the establishment of the EDVAW Platform, as well as to promote collaboration between those mechanisms and other UN and regional bodies and agencies with similar mandates.

In order to further develop the work of the mandate, it is imperative that certain core qualities are canvassed of potential candidates for the position of Special Rapporteur on Violence against women. I hereby suggest the following characteristics that may be of assistance to the Consultative Group:

1. Expertise and competence on women's human rights and violence against women.
2. Expertise in independently monitoring State compliance with its obligations, whether at the national, regional or international levels.
3. Understanding of the nature and role of the UN, especially the Commission on the Status of Women, the Human Rights Council, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and the General Assembly, with which the mandate engages.
4. Understanding of the nature and the role of regional monitoring systems on women's rights and violence against women.
5. Understanding of the framework of the CEDAW Convention and work of the CEDAW Committee would be an advantage to promote close collaboration on violence against women and prepare the implementation guide of General recommendation No. 35 (2017)

on gender-based violence against women, elaborated by the CEDAW Committee in cooperation with the Special Rapporteur on violence against women.

6. Understanding and/or experience in engagement with States, civil society organizations and NHRIs.
7. Cooperation, coordination and collaboration skills and experience.
8. Being skilled at dealing with States, UN officials, civil society and other stakeholders.

## **Annex III**

### **CONTRIBUTION FROM THE WORKING GROUP ON ENFORCED OR INVOLUNTARY DISAPPEARANCES**

The Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances submits this contribution to the Consultative Group, in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 5/1, paragraph 51, which provides that “the Consultative Group should take into account, as appropriate, the views of stakeholders, including the current or outgoing mandate-holders, in determining the necessary expertise, experience, skills, and other relevant requirements for each mandate”.

It is the view of the Working Group that the new member to be appointed among the Western European and other States should comply with the following pre-requisites:

1. The selected mandate holder should ideally be a woman. The experience of the Working Group demonstrates that enforced disappearances affects women in differentiated and gendered ways. The voice and guidance of a female member would be crucial to ensure the Working Group delivers its mandate in a comprehensive and inclusive manner, and to achieve gender balance within the Working Group itself.
2. The selected candidate should have proven knowledge and work experience in human rights protection and advocacy in the area of enforced disappearances, including at the regional level. She should ideally have experience working with relevant regional mechanisms, such as the European Court of Human Rights.
3. The selected mandate holder should have experience working with and supporting relatives and victims of enforced disappearances.
4. The selected candidate should not come from a diplomatic background or have official ties with any particular State from the concerned region, in order to ensure her independence and impartiality.

## **Annex IV**

### **CONTRIBUTION FROM THE MANDATE OF THE WORKING GROUP OF EXPERTS ON PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT**

The Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent deeply appreciates the careful attention of the Consultative Group and the Human Rights Council in selecting experts for this important mandate that has publicly been a leader in the fight against systemic racism. To that end, in selecting new members, the Working Group would ask that the Consultative Group consider lived experience with the mandate (as a person of African descent or other specific expertise in anti-Black racism) and also consider the importance of intersectionality, including gender, migration status, and/or other. The Working Group further welcomes the Human Rights Council and the Consultative Group's consideration of the group dynamic, as we are a consensus body, and remains available to offer specific and candidate-based information for the selection process as well.