

SPECIAL PROCEDURES AND COVID-19

A human rights response to the pandemic



Special procedures have taken various initiatives in relation to COVID-19 with the objective to stress the importance of adopting a human rights approach in addressing the crisis. Special procedures mandate holders have issued various recommendations to States and other stakeholders through various public actions, such as guidance tools, dispatches, trackers, videos or press releases, and they stand ready to assist. Mandate holders are also addressing these issues through their communication procedure and their reports to the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly.

A **general call** stressing that “everyone has the right to life-saving interventions” was initiated by the *Special Rapporteur on the right to health* and issued by more than **60 mandate holders**. They stressed that the COVID-19 crisis cannot be solved with public health and emergency measures only; all other human rights must be addressed too.

45 press releases* (29 individual and 16 joint) have been issued and **29 communications*** have been sent to States and non-State actors by mandate holders.

Guidelines, dispatches and other reference tools have been released on the following themes:

- protecting informal settlements, homeless, renters and mortgage payers, prohibition of evictions, and financialization and the future (*Special Rapporteur on adequate housing*);
- responding to the crisis without halting freedoms of assembly and of association (*Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association*);
- government responses to the pandemic that affect civic freedoms and human rights (*Special Rapporteur on counter-terrorism and human rights*);
- disability considerations during the outbreak and disability-inclusive social protection (*Special Rapporteur on disabilities*);
- recommended economic, financial, monetary, fiscal, tax, trade and social policies (*Independent expert on foreign debt*);
- keeping the judiciary functioning during the crisis (*Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers*);
- the use of force by law-enforcement personnel (*Special Rapporteur on summary executions*);
- racial equity and racial equality in providing health services for all (*Working Group on People of African Descent*).

· A **podcast** featuring the *Special Rapporteur on racism* warning against the rise of xenophobia has been made available;

· a **talk** on “Beyond the outbreak: cultural rights during and after the pandemic” has been delivered by the *Special Rapporteur on cultural rights*;

· a **video campaign** focusing on hand washing, access to sanitation as a measure to prevent the disease, and COVID-19, water and gender equality has been issued by the *Special Rapporteur on water and sanitation*;

· a **video campaign** with a call for a global ban on evictions and recommendations concerning informal settlements has been launched by the *Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing*;

· a **social media campaign** aimed at sharing trends and recommendations issued by Special Procedures, including an open letter addressed to the LGBT community, has been launched by the *Independent Expert on sexual orientation and gender identity*.

A **report** on disease pandemics and the freedom of opinion and expression has been released by the *Special Rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression*.

