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**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[[1]](#footnote-2)\*

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 48/141 and contains an overview of the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), at headquarters in Geneva and New York, and in the field, conducted between 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 due to the change in the annual programme of work of the Human Rights Council.[[2]](#footnote-3) The report should be read in conjunction with the High Commissioner’s report to the General Assembly ([A/76/36](https://undocs.org/A/76/36)) which contains an overview of the activities of OHCHR from 1 January to 30 June 2021.

2. The COVID-19 pandemic represents a challenge of unprecedented proportions to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and has demonstrated the fragility of development processes when not anchored in human rights. The increasingly divergent recovery coupled with shrinking of civic space in many countries is an alarming trend. In the context of the pandemic, OHCHR has emphasised that human rights provide a comprehensive blueprint for a sustainable recovery, as also echoed in the Secretary-General`s Call to Action for Human Rights[[3]](#footnote-4) and the Secretary-General`s Our Common Agenda report,[[4]](#footnote-5) and has called for movement towards a human rights enhancing economy.

3. While the COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact the way OHCHR was able to deliver on its mandate, the Office remained able to adapt to the constraints by using different modalities, such as the increased use of online monitoring tools and hybrid conferencing.

4. OHCHR supported the effective use of human rights mechanisms to solve pressing political, social and economic challenges. It continued supporting the continuous functioning of UN human rights mechanisms and the discharging of their mandates, in remote and hybrid formats during 26 sessions, resulting in the review of 45 State party reports and avoiding human rights protection gaps. The Office also took initiatives to better link these mechanisms with other processes in support of prevention, protection, sustaining peace, sustainable development and peace and security.

5. OHCHR promoted human rights standards in States’ responses to the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure an effective and inclusive recovery, including through thematic guidance notes, advocacy, technical cooperation and experience sharing. OHCHR worked in close cooperation with government entities, national human rights institutions, civil society organisations (CSOs) and UN actors. For instance, OHCHR led recovery needs assessments, identifying gaps in protection to leave no one behind in COVID-19 response plans, strengthening the integration of economic and social rights, including from a macroeconomic perspective. OHCHR contributed human rights analysis and advice to UN Common Country Analyses and Cooperation Frameworks and contributed to National Development Processes.

6. OHCHR continued to prioritize implementation of the Secretary-General’s “The highest aspiration: a call to action for human rights” (Call to Action or C2A), with a call to ensure system-wide responsibility for human rights as well as the imperative to step up human rights integration at 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. Important progress has been made to translate its vision and core principles into tangible action. The C2A has brought the UN system together in the seven thematic areas and has generated genuine commitment across UN entities, which developed tools, guidance and advocacy designed to advance policy coherence and concerted action at country level. In collaboration with the EOSG, OHCHR continued to support the inter-agency effort to ensure that UN field offices are adequately supported and equipped to advance the implementation of the Call to Action, with a focus on identifying concrete actions to at address the most critical human rights issues with the aim of positively impacting peoples’ lives. OHCHR continued to conduct outreach to Member States, CSOs, and other stakeholders to raise awareness and continue the momentum towards its implementation, particularly around the synergies between the Call to Action and the Secretary-General’s Our Common Agenda.

II. Activities of the Office of the High Commissioner

A. International human rights mechanisms

1. Treaty bodies

7. The ten treaty bodies supported by OHCHR had to perform their mandated work online until September 2021, and were thus not able to meet for the full meeting time scheduled. In addition to challenges posed to States parties and stakeholders’ participation, this resulted in increasing backlog of 434 State party reports pending review as of 15 March 2022, largely exceeding treaty bodies’ capacities.

8. The Committee on Migrant Workers adopted [General comment No.5 (2021) on migrants' rights to liberty and freedom from arbitrary detention](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT/CMW/GEC/9459&Lang=en) 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](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC/C/GC/25&Lang=en), addressing the impact of the pandemic. The Subcommittee for the Prevention of Torture resumed *in situ* visits with a mission to Brazil. The Committee on Enforced Disappearances (CED) carried out its first ever country visit, namely Mexico*.*

9. Grants through the Special Fund established in accordance with 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. OHCHR`s capacity building programme supported several States and other stakeholders to engage with treaty bodies and held the first regional consultations to foster exchange on good practices from reporting and follow-up national 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 the serious human rights concerns and situation in Afghanistan, the human rights implications of the ongoing situation in the Sudan, and the grave human rights situation in Ethiopia), as well as an urgent debate on Ukraine. OHCHR continued to support the efforts of the Presidency of the Human Rights Council to implement existing efficiency measures adopted by the Human Rights Council.

12. The Voluntary Technical Assistance Trust Fund to support the participation of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the work of the Human Rights Council, supported the participation of 19 delegates (11 women, 8 men). In December, the Fund also organized a virtual workshop for the Asia region and online induction courses.

13. OHCHR supported investigative and accountability mandates established by the Human Rights Council, namely, on Belarus, Ethiopia, Libya, Myanmar, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem and Israel, Sri Lanka, South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), as well as the mandate of the Team of International Experts on Kasai extended to the entire Democratic Republic of the Congo.[[5]](#footnote-6) The staffing of each of the bodies has been affected by the complex financial situation of the Office as part of the Secretariat. In February, OHCHR supported the establishment and the first session of the new international independent expert mechanism to advance racial justice and equality in the context of law enforcement (A/HRC/RES/47/21).

3. Universal periodic review

14. OHCHR supported the adoption by the Council of the outcomes of the universal periodic review in July and September 2021, and March 2022 and the holding of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review 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, NHRIs, CSOs and UNCTs in the preparation of reports for the Universal Periodic Review, including in Brazil, Burundi, Haiti, Honduras, Liberia, Niger, Tanzania, Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname and Venezuela.

4. Special procedures

15. OHCHR supported the involvement of 58 special procedures and their Coordination Committee in UN processes, including relative to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, on peace and security, peacebuilding and prevention, and 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 documents A/HRC/49/82 and A/HRC/49/82/Add.1. OHCHR continued compiling examples which illustrate the changes and impact led by special procedures and presented a study illustrating special procedures contributions in the prevention of human rights violations and abuses.[[6]](#footnote-7)

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

16. Cooperation continued with Member States and UN entities to incorporate UPR recommendations into efforts to achieve the SDGs, including through the [UPR Practical Guidance for Heads of UN Missions](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/HRBodies/UPR/UPR_Practical_Guidance.pdf),[[7]](#footnote-8) available in all languages, and a new [Repository of UN Good Practices on how the UPR process supports sustainable development,](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/UPR_good_practices_2022.pdf) produced jointly by OHCHR and UNDP.[[8]](#footnote-9) OHCHR, in close cooperation with the Inter Parliamentary Union and the Organisation internationale of la francophonie (OIF), strengthened the capacities of members of parliaments to engage at all stages of the UPR.

17. OHCHR led capacity-strengthening activities to enhance engagement of NHRIs, members of parliament, CSOs and UNCTs with UN human rights mechanisms, including in Brazil, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, Ethiopia, El Salvador, Honduras, Madagascar, Mozambique, Panama, Trinidad and Tobago, South Sudan, Sudan and Suriname, and held the first Regional Consultations with Member States in the MENA region. The UPR implementation Voluntary Fund 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 at its seventy-sixth session, particularly that of the Third Committee, which considered 92 reports prepared under the responsibility of OHCHR. It also involved 67 interactive dialogues with human rights mechanisms, the 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 and the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture awarded, respectively, annual grants for 43 projects to assist 17,000 victims in 33 States, and 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 by COVID-19, OHCHR increased its country-focused advice to strengthen the integration of human rights and of human rights-based approaches (HRBA) to development, drawing on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. OHCHR supported UN field presences with human rights analytical content, and policy for 61 Common Country Analysis (CCA), and UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) processes towards greener and more inclusive recoveries.[[9]](#footnote-10) 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 used and disseminated the Knowledge Exchange Booklet[[10]](#footnote-11) on integration of human rights in the Voluntary National Reviews of Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, Guinea-Bissau, Jordan, Rwanda and Saudi Arabia.

22. OHCHR and UNDP launched a joint project to strengthen UN country teams’ and NHRIs’ capacities on SDGs and prevention, including on disaggregated indicators and data on marginalized and vulnerable groups. OHCHR promoted exchanges on good practices and supported the signing of Memorandums of Understanding between NHRIs, National Statistics Offices and other relevant stakeholders in Albania, Jordan, Moldova, Mongolia, and the Philippines, adding to the already signed MoUs in Kenya, Kosovo,[[11]](#footnote-12) Liberia, Mexico, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Uganda.

23. OHCHR trained UN custodian agencies and regional statistical commissions and collected examples of good practices to generate measurable change and increase understanding on how SDG 10 and SDG 16 are cross-cutting to the SDGs. OHCHR piloted the SDG 16 Survey Initiative in Cabo Verde, El Salvador, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Tanzania, Tunisia, Togo, and Somalia. This tool, developed by UNDP, El Salvador, UNODC and OHCHR, collects data on 13 SDG 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, to help Member States tackle inequalities and address human rights gaps in efforts to build back better from the COVID-19 pandemic. With expanded economic expertise under its Surge initiative, OHCHR provided human rights-based analysis of macroeconomic and fiscal policies and public budgets in more than 15 countries, in an effort to assist with context-specific options for expanding fiscal space and maximizing available resources for economic, social and cultural rights. This also included providing support to governments in their efforts to adopt human rights-based socioeconomic response plans. A particular focus was put 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 his Our Common Agenda report. 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 benefited the most marginalized populations.

25. OHCHR also 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 to the creation of cooperatives in Burundi, and documentation of emblematic cases in Mexico. OHCHR co-led interagency efforts to address ageism and age-discrimination under the framework of the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing 2021-2030. With UN Water, OHCHR led the development of a roadmap to strengthen the integration of human rights to water and sanitation.

26. OHCHR strengthened its engagement with local governments and networks, including by formalizing its cooperation with the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) to help further leverage their role in advancing human rights.

3. Right to development

27. OHCHR led research, produced reports and tools, built capacity and advocated for the right to development in addressing inequalities and asymmetries between countries in COVID-19 preparedness, response and recovery.[[12]](#footnote-13) OHCHR’s advocacy focused among others on international cooperation and solidarity, vaccine multilateralism, sustainable finance, fiscal and policy space, debt relief, illicit financial flows and technology transfer, and on integrating the right to development into climate action.

28. The High Commissioner used her voice to call for urgent action on debt management and debt relief to afford countries in debt distress the necessary fiscal space to maintain essential services. The High Commissioner advocated for States to introduce temporary waiver of relevant intellectual property rights under the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), until the COVID-19 pandemic is contained, to promote access to medicines for all.

29. OHCHR held Hernán Santa Cruz Dialogues on the contribution of development to human rights in Guinea (July) and on the Latin America and the Caribbean on interlinkages between right to development and the right to a healthy environment (December).[[13]](#footnote-14)

30. OHCHR organised the Social Forum (October)[[14]](#footnote-15) and the meeting on Mutually Beneficial Cooperation (March)[[15]](#footnote-16) which echoed the High Commissioner’s calls that COVID-19 recovery must be grounded in human rights, including ensuring universal and equitable access to vaccines and noting that the pursuit of economic interests should not trump health rights. The Office contributed to UNCTAD XV[[16]](#footnote-17) and promoted inclusion of the right to development, human rights and gender equality in the UNLDC V Doha Programme of Action.[[17]](#footnote-18)

4. International financial institutions

31. OHCHR worked in partnership with multilateral development banks (MDBs), their Independent Accountability Mechanisms (IAMs) and civil society to strengthen MDBs’ operational policies, reprisals procedures, and accountability processes. OHCHR contributed to positive results in four significant operational policy review processes, including a new set of Rules and Procedures for the African Development Bank’s IAM and through a training for the Inter-American Development Bank (December). OHCHR launched its report “Remedy in Development Finance” in February and is moving now into its implementation phase.[[18]](#footnote-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 Honduras and Colombia.

5. Business and human rights

33. OHCHR’s 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 in internal policies and practices. OHCHR country engagement increased uptake of the Guiding Principles, including in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Liberia, Mexico, Panama and Peru, including by Governments, business, NHRI, 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 UN Working Group on business and human rights, supported by OHCHR.

6. Environment, climate change and human rights

34. OHCHR carried out research on human rights and COVID-19 response and climate finance, engaged in negotiations of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework; and supported UN system work on protection of environmental human rights defenders, including in Bolivia, Colombia, Honduras, and Mexico, as well as in the Asia-Pacific where OHCHR, UNEP and CSOs co-organised the first Environmental Human Rights Defenders Forum (November). At the 26th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP26), OHCHR launched a report on the human rights links between climate change and migration in the Sahel.[[19]](#footnote-20) OHCHR`s engagement in Article 6 negotiations contributed to the first ever inclusion of human rights in operative 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 (CRSV) for UNSMIL (November). OHCHR supported Senior Women Protection Advisors, sharing lessons learned and good practices on gender-sensitive and victim-centred accountability processes, and on reparations for CRSV. OHCHR participated in the independent evaluation of the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti. OHCHR strengthened the consideration of human rights in UN peace operations. For example, following OHCHR advocacy, Security Council resolution 2612 (2021) on MONUSCO acknowledges transitional justice as integral to peace and security processes in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

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. OHCHR supported the consistent implementation of the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP) including through the adoption and operationalization of HRDDP procedures in Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ethiopia, Georgia, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Peru, Serbia, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and Ukraine. In December 2021, the the European Union and the UN signed an agreement to support the African Union in the implementation of its framework to ensure that AU 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 UN 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 of Central America, South America and Central Africa. OHCHR strengthened prevention by enhancing opensource analysis, data provenance assessments and technological capacity to absorb, process and link data from various sources. OHCHR continued to integrate human rights in the African Union’s continental early warning system.

38. Prevention of genocide and other atrocity crimes remained a priority in OHCHR advocacy.[[20]](#footnote-21) OHCHR held consultations and contributed to the Secretary-General’s report on current system-wide delivery and financing of, and existing gaps in, technical assistance and capacity-building that support the implementation by States of their international human rights obligations and commitments, which provided recommendations on the way forward in the prevention of genocide and other atrocity crimes.

4. Peacebuilding

39. OHCHR strengthened its work supported by the Peace-Building Fund (PBF). As of early 2022, OHCHR has approximately 20 ongoing PBF-supported projects 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 UN Initiative for Peace Consolidation in Bolivia, which contributed to interagency 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, access to justice and human-rights based investigation of gender-related killings, in Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Libya, Mali, Mexico, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Paraguay. In Haiti, OHCHR developed a protection analysis on sexual violence against women and girls in marginalized areas of Port-au-Prince, related to gang criminality. In Bolivia, OHCHR contributed to the work of the Gender Committee of the judiciary, including efforts on preventing political violence and preparing 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 finding 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 UN Action Network 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 Secretary-General report on conflict-related sexual violence. 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. In January, 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 in UN operations in humanitarian settings, including relative to COVID-19, in Africa, the Americas, the Middle East, North Africa and Asia-Pacific.

44. OHCHR continued engaging in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), Global Protection Cluster, Global Health Cluster and the UN COVID-19 Crisis Management Team. It contributed to the IASC Guidance on Bureaucratic and Administrative Impediments to Humanitarian Action, research on collaborative advocacy by humanitarian and human rights actors, the review of the IASC Protection Policy and implementation of the Secretary-General 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 the 2022 Global Humanitarian Overview. OHCHR capacity to engage in humanitarian action was strengthened through an online training for its staff, including lessons learned from COVID-19 response and recovery. OHCHR and Asia-Pacific Forum enhanced capacities of NHRIs in the region on humanitarian action, through piloting an online training.

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.[[21]](#footnote-22) Wide-ranging consultations informed the preparation of the 20 recommendations contained in the Agenda and follow-up. OHCHR monitored and provided technical support to authorities, CSOs and media professionals on the prevention of and response to hate and discriminatory speech in Bolivia and Brazil.

47. OHCHR commemorated the 20th Anniversary of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (A/RES/76/1) and supported several consultations for the establishment of the Permanent Forum of People of African Descent (A/RES/75/314) and also supported the election and appointment processes of its members at the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council, respectively. Through the 11th Fellowship programme for People of African descent, OHCHR empowered 18 African descent fellows to effectively engage with the UN human rights system and advance 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 Chile, Haiti, Mexico and Trinidad and Tobago, and in Niger, Thailand and Southeast Asia. OHCHR led a monitoring mission at the Poland-Belarus border.[[22]](#footnote-23) OHCHR documented lethal disregard at sea, forced expulsions[[23]](#footnote-24) and the impact of COVID-19 on migrants’ rights in Libya [[24]](#footnote-25), as well as climate-related migration in the Sahel.[[25]](#footnote-26) OHCHR enhanced support for implementation and review of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM), including through consultations with relevant stakeholders, such as National Human Rights Institutions and parliamentarians. OHCHR contributed to the new protocol on migrants of the Ibero-American Federation of Ombudspersons.

49. OHCHR, in collaboration with the Office for Counter-Terrorism, published a Trainer’s Guide on Human Rights at International Borders,[[26]](#footnote-27) and undertook high-level dialogues and training workshops for border officials in Mauritania, Morocco, Thailand and Central Asia. OHCHR enhanced its efforts to reshape harmful narratives against migrants at the global and field levels through its campaign and toolbox #StandUp4Migrants, which includes podcasts, comics and photo essays.[[27]](#footnote-28)

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 UN entities, in Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Madagascar, Mexico, Moldova, Montenegro, Peru and Paraguay. In Moldova, OHCHR contributed to establishing and train a Roma community mediators’ institution. OHCHR engagement with relevant Honduras’s authorities 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 towards gender equality.

51. OHCHR enrolled 26 Indigenous and 21 Minorities Senior Fellows from 41 countries in a job-shadowing training programme, in which the fellows were assigned to UN field presences, including OHCHR regional and country offices.

4. Gender equality and women’s rights

52. OHCHR continued it technical assistance and capacity building work on gender equality, including in North Macedonia, where OHCHR supported the development of a Gender Equality Law and Strategy. OHCHR provided technical advice to enhance investigation protocols for gender-related killings of women in Chile and Honduras. In Sudan, OHCHR strengthened the capacities of the Ministry of Social Development’s Unit that address violence against women and girls. In Paraguay, a guide 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 towards 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, piloted in December in Uganda with UNAIDS and the Ministry of Health.

54. Through its Gender Accreditation Programme OHCHR further enhanced its field capacities to integrate a gender analysis in its monitoring, reporting, programmatic and advocacy work. Following participation in the programme, the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine and OHCHR-Colombia achieved the highest level of accreditation. OHCHR Guatemala and Syria have been selected for the third round of the programme.

5. Persons with disabilities

55. The Human Rights and Disability Unit collaboratively with International Paralympic Committee launched in August 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 Moldova ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in November. In Brazil, Georgia, Guatemala, Malawi, Mozambique and Ukraine, OHCHR provided technical support for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities into States’ legal systems and its application in legal proceedings. The UN Human 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 lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGTBIQ+) persons through the UN Free & Equal campaign. OHCHR supported and advised national stakeholders in Albania, Bolivia, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ghana, Honduras, Liberia, Mongolia, Panama, Peru, Serbia, Timor-Leste, Ukraine, Uruguay and Viet Nam. It developed guidance on legal gender recognition and provided support to Resident Coordinator Offices.

58. In Liberia, OHCHR supported the Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR) and the LGBTIQ+ community, including a three-day working session which increased knowledge on prevailing forms of discrimination and violence and protection mechanisms, and common platform was created to flag cases of violence to the INCHR 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 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 accelerated development of a new normative instrument on the human rights of older persons.[[28]](#footnote-29)

8. Children and youth

60. In November 2021, OHCHR, UNICEF and UN Environment Programme launched the Principles and Policy Guidance on Children’s Rights to a Safe, Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), including a child-friendly version. On International Youth Day, 170 young leaders from Colombia, Guatemala and Mexico shared their experience in advancing the right to food and sustainable development, during an online event co-organised by OHCHR and other UN entities.[[29]](#footnote-30)

61. OHCHR promoted the human rights for young people in vulnerable situations through a partnership with Education Above All and Silatech and advocated for a child-sensitive strategy on family reunification (A/HRC/49/31). OHCHR advocated for youth and children participation at intergovernmental level, to shape the discussions and for their recommendations to be considered. OHCHR, UNICEF, the SRSG on Violence Against Children and SRSG on Children and Armed Conflict are holding consultations throughout 2022 with CSOs and children to develop a UN-wide Guidance Note on Child Rights Mainstreaming.

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 this population is 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 Social development challenges faced by persons with albinism (A/76/769).

E. Accountability

1. Transitional justice

63. OHCHR provided technical assistance to relevant State institutions and key stakeholders, including to support the design and implementation of inclusive, context-specific and victim-centred transitional justice processes and to strengthen victims’ participation, including in Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, El Salvador Guatemala, The Gambia, Kenya, Lebanon, Madagascar, Mexico, the Republic of Korea, South Sudan and Syria. In Syria, OHCHR advocated for the establishment of an independent mechanism on missing persons, with effective participation of victims and relatives and consultations (A/RES/76/228). In the DRC, MONUSCO Joint Human Rights Office assisted the elaboration and operationalization of a decree on the establishment of a truth, justice, and reconciliation commission in the Kasai Central 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 on the grave human rights violations perpetrated against political dissidents between 1965-1990, 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, Niger, Occupied Palestinian Territory and the United States. In countries that retained the use of death penalty, OHCHR continued to advocate for the protection of the rights of those facing capital punishment, paying special attention to persons under 18 years of age 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 in the use the death penalty (A/HRC/48).

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 7th review of the Global Counter Terrorism Strategy (June 2021) where language on civic space, children’s rights, women’s rights, and gender equality was strengthened.[[30]](#footnote-31) In addition, as Chair of the human rights working group at the Global Compact on counter terrorism, OHCHR led the development of the UN Human Rights Reference Guide on Proscription of Organizations in the Context of Countering Terrorism (July 2021).[[31]](#footnote-32) 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 UNOCT, notably on returnees’ humanitarian and protection needs, 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, Burundi, Chad, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Haiti, Kenya, Republic of Korea, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Niger, Peru, South Sudan and Uruguay. OHCHR trained officials of the Republic of Korea Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Unification in the documentation and preservation of evidence of crimes against humanity in the 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 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 to address overcrowding. In Mexico, OHCHR promoted the creation of the Extraordinary Forensic Identification Mechanism (MEIF) aimed at addressing 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 in addressing prison overcrowding, in line with 2018 UN Common Position on drug related matters. In September 2021, OHCHR cooperated, with Germany, Switzerland, UNDP, UNAIDS, and other partners to organise the third regional implementation dialogue on the International Guidelines for Human Rights and Drug Policy for States and other stakeholders of the Eastern Europe and Central Asia regions. OHCHR continued to engage with the UN 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 work with networks like the Pacific Human Rights Defenders Network and Women Human Rights Defenders networks in East Africa, Ethiopia and 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 with the University of the South Pacific.

69. OHCHR continued documenting attacks against defenders and journalists, off-line and online, worldwide. OHCHR is leading a pilot project in South-East Asia to map and document online violence against human rights defenders. 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.[[32]](#footnote-33) As co-lead of the Generation Equality Forum Action Coalition on Feminist Movements and Leadership, OHCHR committed to enhance support for feminist movements and women human rights defenders to accelerate gender equality and promote civic space.

70. OHCHR, under the Secretary-General’s Call to Action, led United Nations efforts to make civil society participation more inclusive and safer. OHCHR and the Inter-Parliamentary Union strengthened cooperation through the 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 Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, OHCHR continues to lead UN efforts to prevent and address intimidation and reprisals against those who cooperate with the UN, including by engaging with member States and providing guidance to the UN 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 UN.[[33]](#footnote-34)

2. Digital space

72. As part of the implementation of the Secretary-General’s Roadmap for Digital Cooperation and its Call to Action for Human Rights, OHCHR continued developing guidance for UN entities on human rights due diligence and human rights impact of digital technologies. OHCHR intensified its advocacy for rights-based online content governance, including by directly engaging with Member States and technology companies.

73. OHCHR advocated for human rights-based regulations, bans and moratoria on certain uses of artificial intelligence, including in the context of online content moderation. The High Commissioner’s report on artificial intelligence (A/HRC/48/31) was instrumental to foster engagement with key actors, including Member States, the European Parliament, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the media and UNESCO. 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.[[34]](#footnote-35)

3. Electoral processes

74. OHCHR monitored human rights and conducted related advocacy in the context of electoral processes, including in Chile, Colombia, Congo Brazzaville, Ecuador, The Gambia, Honduras, Mexico, Venezuela 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, providing 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 (NHRIs), including in Algeria, Brazil, Bolivia, Burundi, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Lesotho, Mexico, Niger, Panama, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela. In Algeria, OHCHR contributed to strengthening the capacities of the NHRI and National Statistics Office on human rights and SDGs indicators. OHCHR continued advocating for the establishment of an NHRI in Lesotho. OHCHR supported the NHRI in Mali, through visit exchanges with the NHRI of Côte d'Ivoire in October 2021 and the development of a new database. OHCHR strengthened capacities of NHRIs in Europe on human rights analysis of COVID-19 national recovery plans. In Uruguay, OHCHR supported the NHRI through the organization of a cycle of five public dialogues on the impacts of COVID-19 on human rights.[[35]](#footnote-36) OHCHR also supported the operationalization of National Preventive Mechanisms in Burundi and Niger.

5. Human rights education

76. OHCHR continued leading human rights trainings and education cooperation activities on human rights with universities and institutes, including in Liberia, Mexico and Niger. In September, OHCHR organised a high-level event, where Human Rights Council delegates acknowledged the role of human rights education to build more equitable, sustainable and inclusive societies, resilient in the face of crisis. OHCHR continued implementing the educational youth programme of the World Programme for Human Rights Education and in February 2022 published, jointly with Equitas, “Bridging our Diversities: A Compendium of Good Practices in Human Rights Education”.

III. Conclusions

77. **The ongoing pandemic, including the Omicron surge, was a defining characteristic of the reporting period, setting back efforts to recover better and further exacerbating the severe human rights consequences. Humanity faces the challenge to both learn the hard lessons the pandemic is teaching us and build rights-respecting societies that will be more resilient to this and 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 upon our ability to move forward in addressing that challenge.**

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

79. **Human rights as a universal concept responded to the horrors of the second World War, and the demand that they never be repeated. Since that time, the human rights framework has been developed and implemented, and it has been 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.**

80. **Investing in human rights require efforts, which the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights will continue to encourage and to sustain. The Office continues to play an indispensable role in mainstreaming human rights within the United Nations, making the UN system stronger and more effective. The relevance of the Office’s work is reflected by 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 UN Human Rights Council pursues a growing range of thematic and country-related initiatives, depending on the Office 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 human rights results that make an impact in peoples’ daily lives. In that regard, in extending its Office Management Plan through 2023, the Office has maintained its overall strategic direction, while placing additional emphasis in areas that are particularly relevant today. These include addressing inequalities, 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. As the pandemic has set back gender equality and pushed those already marginalized further behind, OHCHR’s engagement to accelerate progress on achieving the 2030 Agenda will also continue to intensify.**

83. **The High Commissioner appreciates the support of Member States for the Office’s work, and the trust exemplified by the Office’s growing workload. Investment in human rights is an investment in our shared prosperous and peaceful future, and this work remains substantially under-resourced. The High Commissioner encourages Member States to reflect the importance of this work by allocating resources that match the challenges we face at the country, regional and global levels, and through ongoing support to OHCHR.**

1. \* The present report was submitted after the deadline in order to reflect the most recent information. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. See statements of the President of the Human Rights Council PRST OS/13/1 and PRST OS/14/1. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. <https://www.un.org/en/content/action-for-human-rights/index.shtml>. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. <https://www.un.org/en/content/common-agenda-report/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/co-is>. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. A/HRC/48/21. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/UPR_good_practices_2022.pdf>; <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/upr-main>. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/HRBodies/UPR/UPR_Practical_Guidance.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. In Asia Pacific: Bangladesh, Fiji, India, Lao PDR, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Viet Nam, Pacific multi-country regional assessment (this is an assessment of 12 additional island countries, not counting Fiji and Samoa, namely Cook Islands, Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Republic of Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu; in Europe and Central Asia: Albania, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan. Also, in Latin American and the Caribbean: Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Caribbean Multi-Country Assessment (CMCA)[2], Chile, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Paraguay, Peru, Venezuela. In the Middle East and North Africa: Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Yemen. In West Africa and Central Africa: Benin, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Congo, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Nigeria, Niger, Senegal, Gabon, Chad. In southern and east Africa: Burundi, Botswana, Eritrea, Kenya, Lesotho, Mauritius, Mozambique, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/29435Knowledge\_Exchange\_Booklet.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. All references to Kosovo should be understood to be in the context of UN Security Council resolution 1244 (1999). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. <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>; <https://www.upeace.org/departments/e-course-on-the-right-to-development>. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/ESCR/Pages/hernan-santa-cruz-dialogues.aspx>. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Poverty/SForum/Pages/SForum2021.aspx>. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. <https://hrcmeetings.ohchr.org/HRCSessions/RegularSessions/49session/Pages/Panel-discussions.aspx>. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Development/Pages/TradeandInvestment.aspx>. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. A/CONF.219/2022/3. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-03/Remedy-in-Development.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/HR-climate-change-migration-Sahel.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. A/HRC/48/39 and A/HRC/48/42. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. A/HRC/RES/43/1, A/HRC/47/53 and A/HRC/47/CRP.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/2021/12/press-briefing-notes-polandbelarus-border>, 21 December 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/stories/2021/11/report-highlights-unsafe-and-undignified-expulsion-migrants-libya>. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Migration/A_pandemic_of_exclusion.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
25. <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/HR-climate-change-migration-Sahel.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
26. <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/HR_InternationalBorders.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
27. <https://www.standup4humanrights.org/migration/en/index.html>. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
28. A/HRC/49/70. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
29. <https://bit.ly/3Bbhxv5>. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
30. A/RES/75/291. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
31. [https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Terrorism/BHRRG\_on\_Proscription\_of\_  
    Organizations\_EN\_WEB.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Terrorism/BHRRG_on_Proscription_of_Organizations_EN_WEB.pdf). [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
32. <http://romena.ohchr.org/en/FoA_MENA>. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
33. A/HRC/48/28. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
34. Council of Europe, HC speech, 28 March 2022 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/2021/09/committee-legal-affairs-and-human-rights-parliamentary-assembly-council-europe-hearing>. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
35. [https://www.gub.uy/institucion-nacional-derechos-humanos-uruguay/comunicacion/noticias/  
    culmino-ciclo-dialogos-inddhh-derechos-humanos-tiempos-pandemia](https://www.gub.uy/institucion-nacional-derechos-humanos-uruguay/comunicacion/noticias/culmino-ciclo-dialogos-inddhh-derechos-humanos-tiempos-pandemia). [↑](#footnote-ref-36)