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# **Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**

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# **Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**



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*Note*

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## Chapter I

### Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [48/141](#) and contains an overview of the activities of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Geneva and New York and in the field from 1 January to 30 June 2021. It highlights activities undertaken under the thematic priorities reflected in the OHCHR management plan for 2018–2021.<sup>1</sup> The report should be read in conjunction with the annual report of the High Commissioner to the Human Rights Council ([A/HRC/47/54](#)), which contains an overview of the activities of OHCHR from 1 July 2020 to 15 March 2021.
2. As at 30 June 2021, OHCHR had 95 human rights field presences worldwide.
3. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic continued to dominate the reporting period and affect OHCHR activities, including in terms of limitations of travel to field missions and in-person meetings. Nonetheless, OHCHR continued to actively implement its mandate, inter alia, through remote human rights monitoring and online delivery of technical assistance and capacity-building support.
4. OHCHR also assisted, through improved digital solutions, in the continuous functioning of human rights mechanisms and the discharge of their mandates, in remote and hybrid formats, thereby avoiding potential protection gaps.
5. OHCHR focused on supporting Member States in building back better through the provision of advice on human rights-based approaches and policies. In line with the Secretary-General's "The highest aspiration: a call to action for human rights",<sup>2</sup> OHCHR also played a central role in ensuring action to advance the United Nations system-wide responsibility for human rights. Focused efforts to generate collective and sustained engagement by the United Nations system on concrete thematic strategic interventions were accompanied by outreach to Member States, civil society organizations and other stakeholders to raise awareness on the call to action and build momentum for its implementation. The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights worked closely with the Assistant Secretary-General for Strategic Coordination in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General to lead the operationalization of the call to action.

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<sup>1</sup> Available at [www2.ohchr.org/english/OHCHRRReport2018\\_2021/OHCHRManagementPlan2018-2021.pdf](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/OHCHRRReport2018_2021/OHCHRManagementPlan2018-2021.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25603](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25603).

## Chapter II

### Activities of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner

#### A. International human rights mechanisms

##### 1. Treaty bodies

6. Owing to the pandemic, the 10 treaty bodies supported by OHCHR continued to perform their mandated work online, facing several operational challenges. The High Commissioner acknowledges their commitment and dedication in these prolonged difficult circumstances.

7. During the reporting period, the treaty bodies reviewed online 13 State party reports, adopted 61 lists of issues, considered 128 individual communications and adopted two general comments. The Committee on Enforced Disappearances registered 196 new urgent action requests and, overall, treaty bodies registered 201 individual communications.

8. OHCHR supported States in preparing their reports for treaty bodies, including Belize, Chad, the Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kiribati, Kyrgyzstan, Panama, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

9. OHCHR supported three meetings of States parties to elect members of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Committee on Enforced Disappearances and the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families.

##### 2. Human Rights Council

10. Through virtual and hybrid modalities, OHCHR supported the Human Rights Council in the holding of two regular sessions and two special sessions, namely, on the human rights implications of the crisis in Myanmar and on the grave human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

11. OHCHR continued to support the efforts of the Presidency of the Human Rights Council to implement existing efficiency measures and refined the methods of work of the Consultative Group of the Human Rights Council.

12. OHCHR supported investigative bodies mandated by the Human Rights Council, namely, on Burundi, Libya, South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Yemen, and on the situation in Kasai, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The staffing of each of the bodies has been affected by the complex financial situation of the Office and the wider Secretariat.

13. Pursuant to resolutions of the Human Rights Council, OHCHR initiated an examination of the human rights situation in Belarus and an accountability-related mandate with respect to Sri Lanka (see Council resolutions [46/20](#) and [46/1](#) respectively) and continued implementing an evolving mandate on the promotion of accountability regarding the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

##### 3. Universal periodic review

14. OHCHR supported the adoption by the Council of the outcomes of the universal periodic review in March 2021 and the holding of sessions of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review in a hybrid format in January and May. The Voluntary

Fund for Participation in the Universal Periodic Review facilitated the remote participation of the States in the proceedings.<sup>3</sup>

15. 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, including in Belarus, Chad, Haiti, Micronesia (Federated States of), Palau, Papua New Guinea, the Republic of Moldova, the Solomon Islands, Samoa, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Somalia, South Sudan and Venezuela (Bolivarian State of).

16. Through the Voluntary Fund for Financial and Technical Assistance in the Implementation of the Universal Periodic Review, OHCHR supported technical cooperation activities in 27 States for the establishment of national mechanisms for reporting and follow-up, as well as for the implementation of national human rights action plans and measures against racial discrimination.

17. As part of the implementation of the Secretary-General's call to action for human rights, OHCHR rolled out practical guidance<sup>4</sup> to provide advice to heads of United Nations entities on how to maximize the universal periodic review process at the country level. OHCHR also issued a study on good practices<sup>5</sup> emerging from the first three cycles of the universal periodic review of seven States.

#### 4. Special procedures

18. OHCHR supported the involvement of 55 special procedures in United Nations processes, including in the areas of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, peace and security, peacebuilding and the prevention agenda.

19. An overview of the activities and achievements of mandate holders can be found in documents [A/HRC/46/61](#) and [A/HRC/46/61/Add.1](#).<sup>6</sup> OHCHR also supported the Coordination Committee of Special Procedures.

20. OHCHR supported special procedure mandate holders in developing tools and advice to respond to the human rights challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>7</sup>

21. Given that several mandated activities could not take place owing to pandemic-related restrictions, OHCHR assisted special procedure mandate holders in addressing challenges arising from working remotely. OHCHR remains committed to supporting them in resuming all their activities in person as soon as possible and welcomes that several core activities are already starting to resume in this manner.

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

22. OHCHR conducted a range of capacity-building activities to establish or strengthen national mechanisms for reporting and follow-up, strengthen the engagement of national human rights institutions, civil society organizations and United Nations country teams with United Nations human rights mechanisms and

<sup>3</sup> Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Georgia, Honduras, Jamaica, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Malawi, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Micronesia (Federated States of), Mongolia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Niger, Oman, Palau, Panama, Paraguay, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia and United States of America.

<sup>4</sup> Available at: [www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/UPR/UPR\\_Practical\\_Guidance.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/UPR/UPR_Practical_Guidance.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Available at [www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/UPR/Emerging\\_UPR\\_GoodPractices.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/UPR/Emerging_UPR_GoodPractices.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> Examples of the impact of their work can also be found at [www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/SP/Pages/Making-a-difference.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/SP/Pages/Making-a-difference.aspx).

<sup>7</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/SP/Pages/COVID-19-and-Special-Procedures.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/SP/Pages/COVID-19-and-Special-Procedures.aspx).



develop action plans and monitor progress through human rights and Sustainable Development Goal indicators, including in Bahrain, Belize, Botswana, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Gabon, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Maldives, the Philippines, Serbia, Seychelles, South Sudan, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the Sudan, Ukraine and Viet Nam.

23. 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 17 torture prevention projects implemented by national prevention mechanisms and non-governmental organizations in 13 States.

24. OHCHR continued implementing the #Faith4Rights toolkit with faith-based actors, special procedures and treaty bodies,<sup>8</sup> co-organizing with United Nations partners monthly peer-to-peer learning events.<sup>9</sup>

## **6. Humanitarian funds**

25. Under the 2021 call for applications, the United Nations voluntary trust fund on contemporary forms of slavery awarded annual grants for 37 projects in 30 States to support rehabilitation for more than 17,000 victims of contemporary forms of slavery. Under the 2021 call for applications, the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture awarded annual grants for 180 projects to assist more than 47,000 victims of torture in 79 States. Three emergency grants were also awarded to respond to the needs of victims of torture during specific human rights and humanitarian crises.

## **B. Development**

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

26. Building on the Secretary-General's call to action for human rights, OHCHR enhanced cooperation with Member States, United Nations entities and resident coordinators, and civil society organizations to provide advice on human rights-based and gender-responsive socioeconomic responses to the pandemic, including in Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Cambodia, Honduras, Kenya, Montenegro, Paraguay, the Republic of Moldova, Serbia and Ukraine by, inter alia, providing technical support to adopt a human rights-based approach to data and conducting targeted country analyses to substantiate policy recommendations on groups disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

27. Through its surge initiative, OHCHR deployed macroeconomists to support national authorities and institutions, United Nations country teams and other stakeholders in devising sustainable development strategies with a human rights lens to ensure a rights-based economic recovery. OHCHR continued to partner with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the United Nations International Children's Fund in Western and Central Africa as well as in the Caribbean region with UN-Women and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean to provide assessment reports on the effects of the COVID-19 crisis on affected populations.

28. In May 2021, in collaboration with United Nations partners, OHCHR co-organized an online workshop with United Nations economists from more than 20 countries to enhance United Nations cooperation to support COVID-19 recovery

<sup>8</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/FreedomReligion/Pages/FaithForRights.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/FreedomReligion/Pages/FaithForRights.aspx).

<sup>9</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Religion/GlobalPledgeRecommendations.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Religion/GlobalPledgeRecommendations.pdf).

through fairer economies. OHCHR provided technical assistance for the integration of human rights in United Nations common country analyses, United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks and other United Nations development programmatic tools.

29. OHCHR continued to contribute to the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal indicators linked to human rights, including the four that are under OHCHR custodianship.<sup>10</sup> Upon request from the United Nations Crisis Management Team for COVID-19, OHCHR supported United Nations resident coordinator offices and country teams in the implementation of human rights indicators to assess and mitigate the human rights impact of the pandemic. OHCHR provide technical assistance to national institutions to integrate a human rights-based approach to data collection, disaggregation and analysis, including in Ethiopia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, the Republic of Moldova, the Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic.

## 2. Right to development

30. OHCHR continued to strengthen efforts to operationalize the right to development in the context of COVID-19, advocating in that context for renewed multilateralism, international solidarity and cooperation and an enabling environment for development free of obstacles. OHCHR amplified calls to share the benefits of development, including universal and equitable access to vaccines, health technologies, knowledge and intellectual property.

31. OHCHR organized a first meeting on promoting mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of human rights, under the theme of the role of poverty alleviation in promoting and protecting human rights, which was held in February 2021. It also organized the second Hernán Santa Cruz Dialogue, held in Ukraine in April, under the theme of social protection,<sup>11</sup> at which a United Nations policy paper on social protection was launched.<sup>12</sup> OHCHR further organized an intersessional seminar on the contribution of development to the enjoyment of all human rights, held in May.<sup>13</sup>

32. OHCHR supported the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development and the Working Group on the Right to Development.<sup>14</sup> It engaged in the preparatory work for the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. OHCHR organized, jointly with UN-Women, a side event on realizing human rights and gender equality in least developed countries, held in May.<sup>15</sup>

## 3. International financial institutions

33. In the intersecting context of COVID-19 and climate change, OHCHR increased its work with international financial institutions and in the sphere of fiscal space for development, in particular to support middle-income and lower-income countries struggling with difficult debt conditions.

34. In relation to its project on accessing remedy in development finance, OHCHR carried out a final round of targeted consultations with development finance institutions and their accountability mechanisms from various regions. The project

<sup>10</sup> See <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Indicators/Pages/SDGindicators.aspx>.

<sup>11</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/ESCR/Pages/hernan-santa-cruz-dialogues.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/ESCR/Pages/hernan-santa-cruz-dialogues.aspx).

<sup>12</sup> Available at <https://ukraine.un.org/en/124888-un-policy-paper-social-protection-ukraine>.

<sup>13</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Development/Pages/contributionofdevelopment.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Development/Pages/contributionofdevelopment.aspx).

<sup>14</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Development/Pages/21stSession.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Development/Pages/21stSession.aspx).

<sup>15</sup> See [www.unwomen.org/en/news/events/2021/05/event-realizing-human-rights-and-gender-equality-in-least-developed-countries](http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/events/2021/05/event-realizing-human-rights-and-gender-equality-in-least-developed-countries).

will result in a publication for policymakers and practitioners, to feed into accountability review processes of development finance institutions.

35. OHCHR also supported field actions in relation to investment projects supported by development finance institutions in the Asian and Latin American and Caribbean regions and contributed to processes to revise the safeguard and accountability policies of the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the International Finance Corporation, as well as the Dutch Entrepreneurial Development Bank.

#### **4. Economic, social and cultural rights**

36. OHCHR advocated for comprehensive and human rights-based social protection measures and universal health coverage to respond to the COVID-19 crisis, as critical elements of the new social contract called for by the Secretary-General.

37. As part of its surge initiative and through a team of field-facing economists, OHCHR provided country-specific and context-specific advice on response and recovery strategies and the use of appropriate fiscal policies to maximize the resources available to States for economic, social and cultural rights.

38. OHCHR provided technical assistance to strengthen the capacity of governments, national human rights institutions and civil society and regional organizations with regard to social and economic rights, including in Argentina, Barbados, the Bahamas, Cambodia, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mauritania, the Republic of Moldova, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Somalia, the Sudan, Uganda, Ukraine, Uruguay, Uzbekistan and Zambia, as well as in Kosovo.<sup>16</sup>

#### **5. Business and human rights**

39. OHCHR organized a panel discussion at the Human Rights Council on the tenth anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, held in June.<sup>17</sup> In the context of its B-Tech Project,<sup>18</sup> OHCHR promoted the implementation of the Guiding Principles in the technology sector and released foundational papers and briefings,<sup>19</sup> engaged with policymakers drafting due diligence regulations and launched a community of practice with some of the largest technology companies.

40. In April 2021, OHCHR supported the second session of the open-ended intergovernmental working group to elaborate the content of an international regulatory framework, without prejudging the nature thereof, relating to the activities of private military and security companies.<sup>20</sup>

41. OHCHR expanded its technical assistance and advice on business and human rights in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Guatemala, Guinea, Honduras, Kenya, Madagascar, Montenegro, Mexico, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Rwanda, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Thailand and Uganda and, regionally, with Pacific Island States.

42. OHCHR contributed to the holding of sessions of the Asia-Pacific Responsible Business and Human Rights Forum on ethical advertising and human rights and on

<sup>16</sup> All references to Kosovo should be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

<sup>17</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Business/B-Tech/concept-note-hrc47-panel-ungps-anniversary.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Business/B-Tech/concept-note-hrc47-panel-ungps-anniversary.pdf).

<sup>18</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Business/Pages/B-TechProject.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Business/Pages/B-TechProject.aspx).

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/IGWG\\_PMSCs/Pages/IGWGIndex.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/IGWG_PMSCs/Pages/IGWGIndex.aspx).

businesses supporting human rights defenders to safeguard the environment. In the Russian Federation, OHCHR developed a large-scale project in partnership with the national network of the United Nations Global Compact aimed at enhancing the capacity of business companies to integrate corporate responsibility measures.

## **6. Environment, climate change and human rights**

43. As part of its efforts to operationalize the Secretary-General's call to action for human rights, OHCHR advocated for the recognition, advancement and implementation of the human right to a healthy environment.<sup>21</sup>

44. OHCHR maintained a focus on capacity-building and knowledge, including through an analytical study on the promotion and protection of the rights of older persons in the context of climate change (see [A/HRC/47/46](#)), supporting the Paris Committee on Capacity-building in launching a new online course<sup>22</sup> on human rights and climate change and collaborating on an Earth Day campaign.

45. OHCHR organized webinars on the impact of climate change and business activities on indigenous peoples, including environmental defenders, in South-East Asia and supported a session of the seventh Asia-Pacific Adaption Forum.

46. OHCHR continued to share expertise and provide support for strengthened integration of human rights principles and norms in the European Green Deal and related policy and legislative proposals. OHCHR supported the implementation of the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Agreement), which entered into force in April, especially by raising awareness about the obligations of the 11 ratifying States to protect environmental defenders.

## **C. Peace and security**

### **1. Support for peace missions**

47. Notwithstanding the challenges posed by COVID-19 for United Nations peace operations, OHCHR continued to integrate human rights in United Nations peace operations, in line with the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative.<sup>23</sup>

48. OHCHR participated in the establishment of the human rights component of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan and supported the drawdown of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur. It is participating in the strategic planning exercise for the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations Support Mission in Libya. OHCHR also participated in the assessment of the support of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali to the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel.

49. OHCHR contributed to policy, guidance and training for United Nations peace operations and supported human rights components of peace operations in investigating and reporting conflict-related sexual violence with an emphasis on a victim-centred approach.

<sup>21</sup> See, for example, [www.unep.org/news-and-stories/statements/joint-statement-united-nations-entities-right-healthy-environment](http://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/statements/joint-statement-united-nations-entities-right-healthy-environment).

<sup>22</sup> See [www.uncclearn.org/courses/an-introduction-to-climate-change-and-human-rights/](http://www.uncclearn.org/courses/an-introduction-to-climate-change-and-human-rights/).

<sup>23</sup> Available at <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/action-for-peacekeeping-a4p>.

## 2. Human rights due diligence and compliance frameworks

50. OHCHR contributed to the strengthening of the implementation of the human rights due diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces in mission and non-mission settings, providing technical assistance, including in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Chad, Colombia, Libya, Malawi, Mali, Maldives, Mauritania, Montenegro, the Niger, the Philippines, Somalia, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Ukraine and Uzbekistan, as well as in Kosovo.

51. OHCHR supported the efforts of the African Union to enhance and operationalize the human rights, international humanitarian law and conduct and discipline compliance framework for African Union peace support operations. It also assisted the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel in implementing its human rights and international humanitarian law compliance framework. In collaboration with the Joint Force, OHCHR organized workshops in Chad, Mauritania and the Niger to develop a regional strategy on the protection of civilians.

52. OHCHR provided technical assistance on human rights to military and/or police authorities and personnel in Burkina Faso, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania and Uganda. In Somalia, OHCHR provided technical support for the human rights policy of the Somali National Army adopted by the Federal Government in May 2021.

## 3. Prevention, early warning and emergency response

53. OHCHR dispatched emergency response teams in the context of potential, emerging or actual crises, including through the internal rapid deployment roster and contingency fund, in Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Chad, the Niger and Uganda, as well as in Ethiopia and bordering regions in the Sudan to monitor the human rights situation in relation to the Tigray region. It also strengthened its remote monitoring capacity in relation to Myanmar.

54. OHCHR provided early warning information, recommendations and technical assistance to Governments and/or United Nations country teams to mitigate social and political conflicts and human rights violations and address issues triggering recurring tensions, including in Burkina Faso, Colombia, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Kenya, Malawi, Montenegro, Nicaragua, Peru, Uganda and Zambia. In Cambodia, OHCHR continued to support the development of a human rights risk dashboard for the Common Country Assessment.

55. OHCHR strengthened its information management and data analysis capacity to support United Nations-wide prevention processes, leveraging the recommendations of human rights mechanisms, and an online tracking system capturing information on pandemic-related human rights issues. With a view to operationalizing Human Rights Council resolution [45/31](#) on the contribution of the Council to the prevention of human rights violations, OHCHR initiated the development of a strengthened systematic internal early warning process.

56. OHCHR contributed through human rights information and analysis to the regional monthly review meetings, the United Nations Secretariat's Deputies Committee prevention-focused horizon-scanning of the Secretary-General's prevention agenda and products of the United Nations Operations and Crisis Centre.

## 4. Peacebuilding

57. OHCHR continued efforts to integrate human rights in the United Nations work on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, including through the new joint workplan for

the period 2021–2022 of the Peacebuilding Support Office and OHCHR. Together, they also collaborated on the operationalization of the Secretary General’s call to action for human rights and supported follow-up to Human Rights Council resolution 45/31.

58. With the support of the Peacebuilding Fund, in 2021, OHCHR implemented 18 joint United Nations projects on dialogue and reconciliation, democratic governance, civic engagement, empowerment of young people and women in political processes, and women’s rights issues. The 2021 Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative of the Peacebuilding Fund also includes a focus on the promotion and protection of civic spaces, notably regarding land, indigenous peoples and environmental issues.

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

59. OHCHR supported the United Nations operationalization of a human-rights and victim-centred approach to sexual exploitation and abuse and contributed to the response to gender-based violence in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, in line with the Secretary-General’s political engagement strategy and within the Spotlight Initiative framework.

60. OHCHR, as a co-lead entity of the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, assisted national authorities in building institutional safeguards against impunity for sexual violence crimes, including in the Central African Republic, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea and Iraq. The Team of Experts also partnered with the *Journal of International Criminal Justice* to foster a global community of practice on accountability for sexual violence in conflict.

61. OHCHR supported the creation and launch of the civil society-led platform Latin American Network for Gender-based Strategic Litigation and delivered capacity-building to women’s organizations from Central America on strategic litigation on sexual and reproductive rights. In several countries in Latin America, OHCHR promoted a model protocol for the investigation of gender-related killings of women.<sup>24</sup> In Colombia, it implemented a model for access to justice by youth and women victims of sexual violence and enforced disappearances. In Honduras, OHCHR provided technical assistance to the Attorney-General’s Office to strengthen the investigation of femicides. In the Middle East region, it facilitated social media campaigns and advocacy against gender-based violence in the context of COVID-19.

62. OHCHR supported prevention, accountability efforts, the protection of victims and the integration of a gender perspective in human-rights monitoring and investigations. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia and South Sudan, it supported the implementation of action plans to combat sexual violence.

## **6. Humanitarian action**

63. OHCHR remained engaged in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, the Global Protection Cluster and the United Nations COVID-19 Crisis Management Team. It contributed to key protection advocacy messages, notably the statement by principals of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on gender-based violence in the Tigray region of Ethiopia and the common narrative on the climate emergency and humanitarian action, and to the development of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee action plan against racism and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee operational

<sup>24</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Women/WRGS/ProtocoloLatinoamericanoDeInvestigacion.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Women/WRGS/ProtocoloLatinoamericanoDeInvestigacion.pdf) (in Spanish).

guidance on data responsibility in humanitarian action.<sup>25</sup> OHCHR also assisted with the development and review of the protection analysis framework elaborated by the Global Protection Cluster.

64. Since March, OHCHR has been part of the Global Health Cluster, to support the protection of vulnerable groups in the implementation of vaccination plans, the COVAX buffer working group and the Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network.

65. OHCHR continued integrating human rights in United Nations operations in humanitarian settings, including in relation to COVID-19, in the Africa, Americas, Middle East and North Africa and Asia-Pacific regions. That included mainstreaming the centrality of protection in the United Nations responses to the conflict in the Tigray region and the volcanic eruption in Saint Vincent and Grenadines, as well as supporting the coordination of the Protection Cluster response to the escalation of hostilities in Gaza.

## **D. Non-discrimination**

### **1. Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance**

66. Pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 43/1, OHCHR presented a comprehensive report on systemic racism and violations of international human rights law against Africans and people of African descent by law enforcement agencies, especially those incidents that resulted in the death of George Floyd and other Africans and people of African descent, to contribute to accountability and redress for victims (A/HRC/47/53), containing an agenda towards transformative change and calling upon States to translate the agenda into action plans and concrete measures.

67. OHCHR assisted Chad and Costa Rica as co-facilitators of the intergovernmental process to define the modalities, format and substantive and procedural aspects of the Permanent Forum of People of African Descent and supported the intergovernmental consultations that commenced in April 2021.

68. OHCHR provided assistance in the development of national action plans against racial discrimination envisaged in the European Union Anti-Racism Action Plan 2020–2025. It also monitored and provided technical support to authorities, civil society organizations and media professionals in the prevention of and response to hate and discriminatory speech in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia and South Sudan. In Peru, OHCHR provided technical assistance in the design of the national policy for Afro-Peruvian people.

### **2. Migrants**

69. OHCHR monitored the human rights of migrants worldwide and in the context of the COVID-19 crisis. It also joined United Nations and regional human rights mechanisms to release a joint guidance note on equitable vaccine access for all migrants.<sup>26</sup>

70. OHCHR worked with local partners to implement the #StandUp4Migrants campaign<sup>27</sup> to shift harmful narratives on migration.<sup>28</sup> In the Bahamas and Panama, it strengthened the capacity of national actors to report on the human rights issues of migrants. OHCHR assessed the situation of refugees and migrants from the Bolivarian

<sup>25</sup> See <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/>.

<sup>26</sup> Available at [www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Migration/JointGuidanceNoteCOVID-19-Vaccines-for-Migrants.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Migration/JointGuidanceNoteCOVID-19-Vaccines-for-Migrants.pdf).

<sup>27</sup> See [www.standup4humanrights.org/migration/en/index.html](http://www.standup4humanrights.org/migration/en/index.html).

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.



Republic of Venezuela and provided technical support, including in the context of the Inter-agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela.<sup>29</sup>

71. In South-East Asia, OHCHR and United Nations partners are developing a regional framework to protect the rights of migrants affected by climate change. In Lebanon and Guatemala, OHCHR provided technical assistance on the rights of migrants in the context of COVID-19.

72. OHCHR delivered support to Member States in the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration through the United Nations Network on Migration at the global, regional and national levels and in its regional reviews.

### **3. Discrimination on the basis of indigenous or minority status**

73. As a member of the United Nations Inter-agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues, OHCHR assisted in the implementation of the call to action on building an inclusive, sustainable and resilient future with indigenous peoples.<sup>30</sup> OHCHR assisted the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and in the preparation of the global action plan for the upcoming International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022–2032) under the coordination of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

74. In March 2021, the United Nations network on racial discrimination and protection of minorities coordinated by OHCHR launched a checklist to strengthen the work at the country level to combat racial discrimination and advance minority rights.<sup>31</sup>

75. OHCHR provided support for legislative and policy changes regarding the protection and promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples, including in Costa Rica, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guatemala and Kenya. It also organized regional workshops on lessons learned from Pacific indigenous peoples on the linkages between human rights and the climate crisis.

76. In the Republic of Moldova, the OHCHR assessment of the inequalities experienced by Roma communities in the Transnistria region was followed by an agreement among stakeholders to establish a Roma community mediators system. In Kenya, OHCHR assessed, together with human rights defenders, the human rights impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable populations in informal settlements and indigenous communities. OHCHR also monitored respect for the human rights of Dalits in Nepal during the pandemic.

77. OHCHR developed live YouTube webinars targeting minority group discrimination through the lens of arts, human rights and cultural anthropology.

### **4. Gender equality and rights of women**

78. OHCHR supported the integration of gender equality in COVID-19 responses by the Organization. It contributed to a checklist for eliminating laws that discriminate against women and girls developed within the framework of the Secretary-General's call to action for human rights, to support United Nations country teams in the development of programmatic tools with a gender lens.

79. In North Macedonia, OHCHR contributed to the enactment of new legislation on gender-based and domestic violence. In the Middle East and North Africa region,

<sup>29</sup> See [www.r4v.info/en/home](http://www.r4v.info/en/home).

<sup>30</sup> See <https://unsceb.org/building-inclusive-sustainable-and-resilient-future-indigenous-peoples-call-action>.

<sup>31</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Minorities/AnnotatedChecklist.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Minorities/AnnotatedChecklist.pdf).



OHCHR initiated dialogues through women human rights networks and media to address inequalities in nationality rights. It also conducted training to address gender stereotyping in legislation and/or the judiciary, including in South Africa, Tunisia and Uruguay.

80. OHCHR organized a three-day online regional workshop on child, early and forced marriage, held in June. It also collaborated with Wikimedia to run the WikiGap Challenge, an online contest focusing on bridging the gender gap on Wikipedia.

## **5. Persons with disabilities**

81. OHCHR provided advice for the adoption or review of legislation on persons with disabilities, including in Belarus, Cambodia and Qatar, and contributed to communication campaigns in Belarus, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Guatemala. In Belize, El Salvador, Madagascar, South Sudan, Tunisia and Eastern Caribbean countries, it strengthened the capacity of organizations of persons with disabilities. OHCHR co-led the pilot roll-out of the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy in Fiji, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

82. OHCHR organized regional webinars on the impact of COVID-19 on the mental health of persons with disabilities and the compliance of legislation in the Arab region with international human rights standards. In Madagascar, OHCHR and the United Nations Population Fund supported the adoption of a national policy and action plan for the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

## **6. Sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics**

83. OHCHR continued to raise awareness on the human rights concerns of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) persons, including through the Free & Equal public information campaign, with new thematic campaigns on the human rights of LGBTIQ+ migrants and young LGBTIQ+ persons.

84. OHCHR supported national campaign activities in Albania, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Mongolia, Panama, Peru, Ukraine and Viet Nam and provided technical cooperation in relation to LGBTIQ+ persons in Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago and Ukraine. The High Commissioner also submitted an *amicus curiae* brief to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in relation to appropriate investigation by national authorities of the killing of a transgender individual in Honduras.

85. OHCHR disseminated its e-learning course<sup>32</sup> to guide United Nations staff on integrating the human rights of LGBTIQ+ persons in United Nations programmes.

## **7. Older persons**

86. OHCHR strengthened advocacy to promote the human rights of older persons in COVID-19 responses. It co-launched the new *Global Report on Ageism* and contributed a working paper on the human rights of older persons to the eleventh session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing.

87. OHCHR coordinated a joint United Nations contribution to the European Commission's public consultation on the European Union Green Paper on ageing.

## **8. Children and youth**

88. The OHCHR network of youth officers continued to promote human rights with and for young people across field presences.

<sup>32</sup> Available at [www.itcilo.org/courses/ohchr-e-learning-course-human-rights-lgbti-people](http://www.itcilo.org/courses/ohchr-e-learning-course-human-rights-lgbti-people).

89. OHCHR, the International Labour Organization and other partners conducted a survey on the impacts of COVID-19 on young people. OHCHR developed quantitative survey results and disaggregated data on the impact of COVID-19 on women and girls in several African countries.

90. OHCHR organized the plenary session of the 2021 Economic and Social Council youth forum commemorating its tenth anniversary, held in April.

91. In Mali, OHCHR organized trainings of trainers for the Malian security forces on child rights and child protection and on human rights monitoring for the regional youth council.

## **9. Persons with albinism**

92. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, OHCHR organized information sessions on the rights of persons with albinism. It provided technical assistance for the promulgation of newly adopted legislation on the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with albinism in Guinea and to enhance their inclusion in all aspects of society and address discrimination against them in Malawi.

## **E. Accountability**

### **1. Transitional justice**

93. OHCHR provided support in a wide range of contexts in the design and implementation of inclusive, context-specific and victim-centred transitional justice processes.

94. OHCHR provided technical assistance in the elaboration of a law on the establishment of the transitional justice commission in the Sudan, adopted in April. In Ukraine, OHCHR supported the adoption by Parliament of legislation bringing provisions on criminal liability for genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression into line with the Rome Statute and customary international law.

95. OHCHR supported the operationalization of the Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commissions in the Central African Republic and Mali as well as the National Commission for the Missing and Forcibly Disappeared in Lebanon.

96. OHCHR provided technical assistance to the Truth Commission, the Unit for the Search for Persons Presumed Disappeared and the Special Jurisdiction for Peace in Colombia. Upon the request of the Appeals Section of the Peace Tribunal, the High Commissioner submitted a technical concept submission on the participation of victims in judicial proceedings to the Special Jurisdiction for Peace. In Tunisia, OHCHR provided technical support to the Specialized Criminal Chambers and the Government committee in charge of following up on the recommendations of the Truth and Dignity Commission. In Mexico, OHCHR provided technical assistance in the investigation of the 2014 disappearance of 43 students in Ayotzinapa.

97. In South Sudan, OHCHR supported the Government in establishing a technical committee to undertake nationwide consultations on the establishment of the commission for truth, reconciliation and healing. Under the Peacebuilding Fund, OHCHR supported 10 universities in Lebanon in implementing projects on the right to truth and dealing with the past. In Kosovo, OHCHR supported transitional justice processes concerning missing persons and assisted survivors of conflict-related sexual violence.

## 2. Death penalty

98. OHCHR advocated with States for the establishment or maintenance of moratoriums on the use of the death penalty, pursuant to General Assembly resolution [73/175](#), and for the protection of rights of persons facing the death penalty, including in Bangladesh, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Mali, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United States of America.

## 3. Counter-terrorism and prevention of violent extremism

99. As chair of the Working Group on Promoting and Protecting Human Rights and the Rule of Law while Countering Terrorism and Supporting Victims of Terrorism under the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, OHCHR continued to ensure that human rights are integrated in counter-terrorism initiatives, including in relation to watch-listing and data collection on passengers and the development of model legal provisions on victims of terrorism.

100. OHCHR engaged in the process of revising the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and supported the roll-out of the global framework for United Nations support to third-country nationals returning from Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic. OHCHR continued working on a research project on the human rights aspects of the use of artificial intelligence in counter-terrorism to ensure compliance by Member States, technology companies and the United Nations with human rights standards and requirements.

101. OHCHR provided technical advice on integrating human rights in national policies and legislation on the prevention of violent extremism and countering terrorism. It organized round tables with the Group of Five for the Sahel on the prevention of violent extremism and combating terrorism. OHCHR also supported authorities in Mali in developing training and outreach materials on international human rights standards during counter-terrorism military operations.

## 4. Administration of justice and law enforcement

102. OHCHR supported the expert-led initiative that developed the Principles on Effective Interviewing for Investigations and Information Gathering<sup>33</sup> launched in June. It collaborated with the United Nations police and the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights on the development of a manual on the same subject for United Nations police officers.

103. Together with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Department of Peace Operations of the Secretariat, OHCHR co-chaired a committee responsible for drafting the United Nations system common position on incarceration<sup>34</sup> presented to Member States in May.<sup>35</sup>

104. OHCHR reviewed the draft penal code of the Dominican Republic, draft legislation on counter-terrorism detention in the Maldives and draft legislation on enforced disappearances in Pakistan. The OHCHR recommendations on steps to protect the rights to a public trial and to a trial without undue delay were encompassed in the “Recommendations for Courts Regarding Safe Work under Quarantine Conditions” issued by the High Council of Justice of Ukraine in May.

<sup>33</sup> Available at [www.apt.ch/sites/default/files/inline-files/PoEI\\_final\\_2021.06\\_0.pdf](http://www.apt.ch/sites/default/files/inline-files/PoEI_final_2021.06_0.pdf).

<sup>34</sup> Available at [www.unodc.org/res/justice-and-prison-reform/nelsonmandelrules-GoF/UN\\_System\\_Common\\_Position\\_on\\_Incarceration.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/res/justice-and-prison-reform/nelsonmandelrules-GoF/UN_System_Common_Position_on_Incarceration.pdf).

<sup>35</sup> Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, thirtieth regular session, May 2021.

105. OHCHR provided legal advice on the use of force and human rights during the development of an international code of conduct for wildlife rangers. It also advocated for the adoption of measures to address overcrowding of prisons, including in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. In Honduras, OHCHR organized a regional online workshop to exchange best practices on penitentiary systems in Latin America during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **5. Human rights and drug policy**

106. In Belarus, OHCHR supported a comprehensive assessment of the country's drug policy, in the light of international human rights standards and good practices. In the Philippines, it supported the United Nations country team in developing a joint programme on human rights, with a focus on strengthening domestic accountability mechanisms and promoting rights-based approaches to drug-enforcement policies.

## **F. Participation**

### **1. Enhancing and protecting civic space and the participation of people**

107. In June 2021, OHCHR and the Inter-Parliamentary Union signed a memorandum of understanding with a view to increasing mutual coordination and cooperation, including on the right to participate in public affairs and increased support to specialized human rights committees within parliaments.<sup>36</sup>

108. OHCHR continued advocating for the participation of civil society in the responses to the pandemic, including groups likely to be left behind, through, inter alia, the leveraging of new technologies.

109. In Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Peru, OHCHR continued supporting human rights defenders and journalists in accessing specific national protection mechanisms. In Ethiopia, it organized a conference for the official launching of a media professionals network for human rights. In Mexico, OHCHR conducted public campaigns to end impunity for crimes against journalists. In Somalia, it provided human rights training for journalists in the Jubba Hoose region.

110. OHCHR also conducted human rights monitoring and reporting in the context of peaceful protests, including in Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Thailand and Ukraine. In Colombia, OHCHR monitored the human rights situation during a period of national strikes and provided technical assistance to dialogue processes.

111. OHCHR enhanced the capacity of human rights defenders, including women human rights defenders, in all regions. It continued to support the strengthening of the East Africa Women Human Rights Defenders Network. In Fiji, in February, OHCHR and the University of the South Pacific launched an academic course on human rights defenders. In Kosovo, OHCHR supported organizations from different ethnic backgrounds in documenting and monitoring human rights on a common platform.

112. OHCHR supported the system-wide implementation of the United Nations guidance note on the promotion and protection of civic space and guidelines on the effective implementation of the right to participate in public affairs.<sup>37</sup> It also continued to co-lead the development of guidance for the United Nations system on peaceful protests.

<sup>36</sup> See [www.ipu.org/news/news-in-brief/2021-06/ipu-and-un-human-rights-strengthen-their-partnership](https://www.ipu.org/news/news-in-brief/2021-06/ipu-and-un-human-rights-strengthen-their-partnership).

<sup>37</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/CivicSpace/Pages/UNRoleCivicSpace.aspx](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/CivicSpace/Pages/UNRoleCivicSpace.aspx).

## 2. Digital space

113. OHCHR promoted human rights law and principles as foundations for governance frameworks for the use of digital technologies, including in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. It advocated directly with and provided guidance to technology companies to integrate human rights standards and principles in their policies, terms of service and products and to encourage the use of processes that are participatory and compliant with human rights.

114. In line with the Secretary-General's Road Map for Digital Cooperation, in May 2021, OHCHR launched a system-wide process to develop policy guidance for human rights due diligence in the development, use and procurement of digital technologies. As part of the implementation of the Secretary-General's call to action for human rights, OHCHR led the development of the Hub for Human Rights and Digital Technology, hosted on the OHCHR website.

## 3. Electoral processes

115. OHCHR monitored human rights and conducted related advocacy and technical assistance in the context of electoral processes, including in Bolivia (Plurinational State of), the Central African Republic, Chad, the Congo, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Mexico, the Niger, Peru and Uganda. In the Central African Republic, the Niger and Uganda, OHCHR strengthened the capacity of State institutions and civil society organizations to conduct early warning efforts and monitor human rights during elections.

## 4. Support for national human rights institutions and regional mechanisms

116. OHCHR supported the adoption of legislation on national human rights institutions in Belize, the Central African Republic, Gabon, Lesotho and the Sudan, with a view to ensuring compliance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles).<sup>38</sup>

117. OHCHR strengthened the capacity of national human rights institutions, including in Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Gabon, the Gambia, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Mali, Madagascar, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Peru, the Philippines, the Russian Federation, Seychelles, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Uganda, Ukraine, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Zambia.

118. OHCHR also organized regional forums and discussions with national human rights institutions in the Africa and Americas regions. OHCHR facilitated a two-day virtual training course for the secretariat of the League of Arab States on integrating a human rights perspective in policies and programmes.

## 5. Human rights education

119. With the aim of institutionalizing human rights education in universities in the Russian Federation, OHCHR assisted in the organization of a human rights summer school in Kazan in the context of the human rights master's programme supported by OHCHR. In the Middle East and North Africa region, OHCHR supported a regional workshop on opportunities for using communications technology in human rights education as well as regional round tables on gender stereotypes in school curricula.

<sup>38</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/statusofnationalinstitutions.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/statusofnationalinstitutions.aspx).

120. In Guatemala, OHCHR launched an online educational platform on the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, including courses on various human rights subjects. OHCHR supported the United Nations country team and the Ministry of National Education of Madagascar, which signed a landmark agreement to provide human rights education in primary and secondary schools.

## **Chapter III**

### **Management and administration**

121. OHCHR continued to focus on innovating through new internal working methods, integrating health and wellness in its building-back-better framework and enhancing the use of information technology to bolster efficiencies.

122. In line with its Geographical Diversity Strategy, OHCHR established a staff working group to develop a new organizational effectiveness action plan on inclusion and recruited a Senior Adviser on Diversity and Inclusion to strengthen leadership accountability and review recruitment practices. It also implemented an innovation project for recent graduates from the Global South, which has become an integrated new United Nations Volunteer pilot programme in OHCHR and is expanding to further close gender and diversity gaps.

123. OHCHR commenced the operationalization of the organizational effectiveness action plan on sustainable environmental management, which integrates environmental sustainability in office work streams, and introduced new travel targets for 2021.

124. In line with the United Nations human rights risk management plan, OHCHR conducted an office-wide risk assessment identifying potential risks, root causes, existing internal controls and response measures and established a risk register.

125. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, OHCHR continued to implement its strategy to build the capacity of its staff to apply technology in human rights training and established an OHCHR learning management system.

## Chapter IV

### Conclusions

126. As noted in the previous reports of the High Commissioner to the Human Rights Council ([A/HRC/47/54](#)) and the General Assembly ([A/75/36](#)), the COVID-19 pandemic continues to have a dramatic impact on human rights on multiple levels worldwide and has translated into both an economic and social crisis and a protection and human rights crisis.

127. At this critical juncture of the global response to an initial recovery from the pandemic, it is critical to leverage the momentum generated by the Secretary-General's call to action for human rights to advance and uphold all human rights for all people everywhere. The call to action is a collective and substantive endeavour, and support from all Member States, regional organizations, civil society organizations and other stakeholders is crucial to the success of that effort. OHCHR will continue to prioritize supporting the United Nations system-wide implementation of the call to action, with an emphasis on country-level action and the leveraging of the recommendations of the human rights mechanisms.

128. Any effective recovery efforts, in policy, law and action, must address the inequalities and protection gaps that have been brought home by the pandemic and have made societies vulnerable. More investment is needed in public service and social protections to shield people from the worst effects of the crisis and similar challenges in the future. That also includes tackling fragile governance, corruption, lack of rule of law and limited access to justice and public services, among other issues.

129. The response to the COVID-19 pandemic has provided an opportunity to rebuild societies on the basis of a new social contract that shares power and resources more fairly and creates more equal opportunities. In order to build back better, human rights must continue to be placed at the centre of recovery efforts in order to ensure that, in law and in fact, no one is left behind. To that end, OHCHR will continue to engage with Member States, civil society organizations and the United Nations system, in line with the Secretary-General's call to action and its objectives of ensuring real impact for people on the ground.

130. OHCHR will also sustain its work on inequalities and discrimination to contribute effectively to the collective efforts to operationalize the new social contract underpinned by a global new deal, called for by the Secretary-General, and to give real effect to the commitment to leave no one behind. A particular emphasis will be maintained on racial justice and equality, including to continue promoting a transformative agenda (see [A/HRC/47/53](#)) aimed at tackling globally the compounding inequalities, marginalization and systemic racism that Africans and people of African descent face in all areas of life.

131. OHCHR will continue to offer support to States in implementing the recommendations of the United Nations human rights mechanisms, which offer detailed, authoritative expert guidance on curbing inequalities and rebuilding inclusive economies, promoting greater freedom, well-being, justice and the rights of both current and future generations.

132. The COVID-19 pandemic has also entailed significant restrictions on gathering, movement and travel, severely affecting the regular form of interaction of OHCHR with partners, including Member States, members of human rights mechanisms, experts and members of civil society, including



regarding field activities. OHCHR has continued to adjust to those challenges and to deliver its mandate, while recalibrating its focus and its methods of work throughout the crisis. Exploring how to move back to in-person activities, OHCHR is committed to continue learning from the experiences of the pandemic and to further OHCHR digitalization to provide, as appropriate, more efficient support to in-person deliberations and activities and to invest in its capacity to better produce and make use of human rights-based data, information and analysis.

133. During the reporting period, the monitoring and reporting work of the OHCHR field presences, including human rights components in peace operations, continued to focus on assessing the impact of the pandemic and the responses of Governments on vulnerable groups. The monitoring of stigmatization, discrimination and restriction of civic space, as well as of conflict-related violations, has been essential to highlight, address and prevent human rights violations. OHCHR will continue to prioritize its work on prevention, as an essential element in the achievement of United Nations goals for sustainable development and sustaining peace. As highlighted on a number of occasions by the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner, the preventive power of human rights extends not only to addressing the root causes of violence and conflict, but also to building cohesion and resilience within societies to withstand unexpected national, regional or global crises, including the ongoing climate emergency confronting the world.

134. The regular budget liquidity constraints of the United Nations Secretariat have continued to have a direct impact on the work of OHCHR and its mandate delivery. The High Commissioner reiterates the importance of ongoing support of Member States to OHCHR, both through the regular budgetary process and voluntary contributions, for the effective discharge of its full global mandate. This assumes critical importance, in the light of the increasing amount of work, including in the field, the operational challenges associated with the COVID-19 context, and the growing volume of requests for technical assistance and new mandates entrusted to OHCHR, as well as the fundamental need for maintaining a sustainable level of professional support to the treaty bodies, special procedures and mandated investigative bodies. In view of the central role of OHCHR in operationalizing the Secretary-General's call to action, adequate support to OHCHR will directly translate into proper and timely assistance to Member States, the United Nations system and other relevant stakeholders, including civil society, in all parts of the world and with respect to the full range of human rights.

