

## Human rights country situations

In 2015, the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council, the Secretary-General, Special Rapporteurs and independent experts continued to address the human rights situation in Member States.

In regard to Africa, the Human Rights Council held its twenty-fourth special session on the human rights situation in Burundi. Violations continued in the Central African Republic and the mandate of the Independent Expert on the situation in that country was renewed for a year. The security and humanitarian situation in Côte d'Ivoire improved. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the human rights situation remained of concern, but there was significant legislative and institutional progress. In Guinea, Government authorities were called on to pursue efforts to guarantee fundamental freedoms during the elections. In Libya, the humanitarian situation was worsened by continued terrorist acts; and in Mali, the situation was fragile following inter- and intra-communal conflicts and terrorism. The human rights situations in Eritrea, Somalia and the Sudan remained of concern.

In the Americas, progress was made in Colombia. Guatemala remained an insecure environment for journalists and human rights defenders. In Haiti, a new systematic, widespread and gross human rights violations and crimes against humanity were ongoing.

The Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran focused on systemic issues that were impeding the ability of Iran to comply with international human rights obligations and commitments, including recommendations the Government accepted during its universal periodic review in March. In Iraq, terrorist groups continued to target different ethnic and religious communities. In Yemen, the escalation of violence continued and contributed to the deterioration of the security and

humanitarian situation in the country. In one State, but deteriorated. Cyprus remained divided, with a buffer zone maintained by the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus, there were several positive developments, including momentum surrounding the resumption of the talks and leaders' commitment to reach a settlement as soon as possible. In Belarus, no substantial reform was discernible during the year and violations continued. The armed conflict in eastern Ukraine continued to affect people living in the conflict zone and their human rights, with 9,098

caused by explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices. The military justice system, continued to have a debilitating effect on Palestinian society. Without accountability, the violations of international human rights and humanitarian law were likely to continue.

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### General aspects

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In the annual report on activities undertaken by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner of Human Rights ( ) [A/HRC/31/3], the High Commissioner, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein (Jordan),





following the publication of the joint report on human rights violations committed between 15 November 2013 and 15 February 2014 by agents of the Congolese national police during Operation Likofi in Kinshasa. He recommended that the Government needed to establish judicial and non-judicial measures to fight against impunity for past and ongoing human rights violations; ensure those convicted of crimes could appeal their convictions and sentences to a higher court; ensure fundamental freedoms of all people in the

treaties to which Eritrea was a party; acknowledge the existence of human rights violations and ensure accountability for past violations; and establish an independent and impartial mechanism to investigate and bring perpetrators to justice. The commission made further recommendations for the Government on the issues of governance and administration of justice, enforced disappearances and arbitrary arrest and detention, conditions of detention, torture and ill-treatment, public freedoms, property, national service, forced labour and gender equality.

In a June report [A/HRC/29/41], submitted pursuant to Council resolution 26/24 [YUN 2014, p. 896], the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Eritrea, Sheila Keetharuth (Mauritius), provided an account of activities undertaken since her previous report [ibid.] and achievements made since she had assumed her functions as the mandate holder. She also provided an

High Commissioner to report to its thirty-first (2016) session on the human rights situation and the work of in Guinea.

### Libya

On 27 March [A/70/53 (res. 28/30)], the Council condemned abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law in Libya, including unlawful killings, indiscriminate shelling and attacks on civilians, abductions and assassinations, including of government officials, judges, human rights activists, journalists and members of civil society organizations, shelling of hospitals, looting of property, and restrictions on freedom of expression. It also condemned terrorist acts, hostage-taking and violence committed against civilians by the so-call Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh) and other terrorist organizations.



Independent Expert for one year requested him to report at its thirty-third (2016) session.

### South Sudan

*Human Rights Council Report*. In January, pursuant to Council resolution 26/31 [YUN 2014, p. 900], the High Commissioner submitted a summary report [A/HRC/28/53] of the panel discussion on the human rights situation in South Sudan held during the Council's twenty-seventh session (Geneva, 24 September 2014). The discussion focused on identifying measures to improve the human rights situation in the country and to strengthen United Nations support for the work of the African Union (AU) Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan and for the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)-led peace process. The High Commissioner concluded the report with recommendations to the Government of South Sudan, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition and other armed actors, the AU Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and the Human Rights Council.

*Human Rights Council Report*. On 2 July [A/70/53 (res. 29/13)], the Council expressed concern at the ongoing human rights violations and abuses and violations of international humanitarian law in South Sudan, including alleged targeted killings, ethnicageru.



to implement the Maya Programme to strengthen indigenous peoples' rights and implemented a project for

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In an October report [A/70/411], submitted in accordance with Council resolution 28/21 (see above), the Special Rapporteur provided an overview of the prevailing human rights situation, with a focus on systemic issues that posed obstacles to the ability of the Government to comply with its international human rights obligations.



tive developments in Myanmar and the commitment of the Government to continue on its path of political, economic and democratic reform. It called on the Government to implement its obligations to protect the right to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly; to step up its efforts to end all remaining human rights violations and abuses, including arbitrary arrest and detention, forced displacement, rape and other forms of sexual violence, torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment, and arbitrary deprivation of property.

The Council expressed concern at the increase in nationalist-based intolerance of religious and ethnic minorities; the situation of persons belonging to the Rohingya minority and other minorities in Rakhine State, including further instances of violence and other abuses; the declaration of the Government that all white card identity documents would expire on 31 March, which would deny persons belonging to the Rohingya minority any form of identification and the right to vote; and further delays to specify a process for the opening of the border in the country.

The Council extended the mandate of the Special Rapporteur for one year and requested her to submit a report to the General Assembly's seventieth (2015)





plan and oversee progress in implementing the recommendations contained in the High Commissioner's reports, as well as outstanding recommendations of the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission and past commissions of inquiry; invite to establish a country presence to monitor the human rights situation, advise on implementation of the recommendations and provide technical assistance; initiate consultations on transitional justice; appoint qualified new members to the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka; issue instructions to all branches of the military and security forces that torture, rape, sexual violence and other human rights violations were prohibited and that those responsible would be investigated and punished; develop a vetting process to remove from office military and security force personnel and any other public official where there were reasonable grounds to believe that they had been involved in human rights violations; prioritize the return of private land that had been occupied by the military and end military involvemen0-28.228.1 (n)( h)-11.

ality. The Government needed to, pending the abolition of the death penalty, establish a moratorium on its application, and in the meantime, comply with its international obligations in not imposing the death penalty except for the most serious offences, suspending the application for crimes committed by persons under the age of 18, and ensuring respect for the rights to due process and to a fair trial in death penalty cases. He called on the international community to encourage the establishment of an international independent and impartial mechanism to investigate alleged violations and abuses of international human rights and humanitarian law; ensure the scaling-up of humanitarian assistance in Yemen; and cooperate with the panel of experts charged with investigating individuals or entities engaging in or providing support for acts that threaten the peace, security or stability of the country, pursuant to Security Council resolution 2140 [YUN 2014, p. 474].

On 2 October [A/70/53/Add.1 (res. 30/18)], the Council expressed concern at the serious (f il (g)-21 (1)43.633-20.2 ( 3(/)(c)-2-1.067.4 v



field of human rights. It also recognized the need for ongoing reporting, including on the most seri-





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East Jerusalem; conduct full investigations into cases of excessive use of force by Israeli security forces and into allegations of settler violence; remove procedural and physical barriers that obstructed access to health care for Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank; ensure that all Palestinian school children in East Jerusalem had access to education; end the practice of administrative detention and reiasic he Wietf soalesins5.4  
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no legal effect. It called on States not to recognize any of the above-mentioned legislative or administrative measures; and requested the Secretary-General to bring the resolution to the attention of all Governments, UN organs, specialized agencies, international and regional intergovernmental organizations and international humanitarian organizations, to disseminate it as widely as possible and to report on the matter at the Council's thirty-first (2016) session.

10. In an 8 May note verbale [A/HRC/29/G/2], Syria informed the Human Rights Council President that the Israeli occupation forces had seized thousands of dunams of land in the occupied Syrian Golan with a view to their distribution among settlers who would be brought in to take over the seized land and set up agricultural projects. In addition, exploratory drilling for oil had begun on the seized land.

11. Pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 28/24 (see above),