



TEXTS ADOPTED

P8_TA(2016)0020

EU priorities for the UNHRC sessions in 2016

European Parliament resolution of 21 January 2016 on the EU's priorities for the UNHRC sessions in 2016 (2015/3035(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to the UN human rights conventions and the optional protocols thereto,
 - having regard to United Nations General Assembly resolution 60/251 establishing the Human Rights Council (UNHRC),
 - having regard to the European Convention on Human Rights, the European Social Charter and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights,
 - having regard to the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2015-2019,
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on the UNHRC,
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on the violation of human rights, including its resolutions on debates on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law,
 - having regard to its resolution of 17 December 2015 on the Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World 2014 and the European Union's policy on the matter¹,
 - having regard to Articles 2, 3(5), 18, 21, 27 and 47 of the Treaty on European Union,
 - having regard to the 2015 annual report of the UNHRC to the UN General Assembly,
 - having regard to Rule 123(2) and (4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas 2015 and 2016 are years of major anniversaries as regards the enjoyment of human rights, peace and security: the 70th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, the 50th anniversary of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the 30th and 20th anniversaries of the UN Declaration on the Right to

¹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2015)0470.

Development (1986) and of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) respectively, and the 15th anniversary of the landmark UN Security Council resolution on women, peace and security (2000) and of the Millennium Development Goals (2000);

- B. whereas upholding respect for human rights irrespective of race, origin, religion, class, caste, sex, sexual orientation or colour is an obligation on all states, whereas it reiterates its attachment to the indivisibility of human rights (whether civil, political, economic, social or cultural), which are interrelated and interdependent, and whereas the deprivation of any one of these rights has a direct and adverse impact on the others; whereas all states have an obligation to respect the basic rights of their respective populations and a duty to take concrete action to facilitate respect for those rights at national level, and to cooperate at international level with a view to eliminating obstacles to the realisation of human rights in all areas;
- C. whereas respect for, and the promotion and safeguarding of, the universality of human rights is part of the European Union's ethical and legal *acquis* and one of the cornerstones of European unity and integrity; whereas internal and external coherence in the area of human rights is essential for the credibility of the EU's human rights policy abroad;
- D. whereas the Union's action in its relations with third countries is guided by Article 21 of the Treaty on European Union, which reaffirms the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms and enshrines the obligation to respect human dignity, the principles of equality and solidarity, and the principles of the UN Charter and international law in its action on the international scene;
- E. whereas respect for human rights should be mainstreamed in all policy areas involving peace and security, development cooperation, trade and investment, humanitarian action, climate change, migration and the fight against terrorism, as these cannot be addressed in isolation from respect for human rights;
- F. whereas UN member states have adopted and committed to Agenda 2030, which envisages a world of universal respect for human rights and human dignity, the rule of law, justice, equality and non-discrimination;
- G. whereas the regular sessions of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), the appointment of Special Rapporteurs, the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism and the Special Procedure addressing either specific country situations or thematic issues all contribute to the international efforts to promote and respect human rights, democracy and the rule of law;
- H. whereas some of the members of the Human Rights Council are acknowledged as being among the most serious human rights offenders and have a dubious record in terms of cooperation with the UN Special Procedures and compliance with their reporting requirements vis-à-vis the UN human rights treaty bodies;

UN Human Rights Council

1. Welcomes the appointment of Ambassador Choi Kyong-lim as President of the UNHRC for 2016;
2. Welcomes the UNHRC's annual report to the UN General Assembly covering its 28th, 29th and 30th sessions;

3. Reiterates its position that UNHRC members should be elected from among states which uphold respect for human rights, the rule of law and democracy, and urges UN member states to promote, among other things, human rights performance-based criteria for any state to be elected as a member of the UNHRC; expresses its concerns about human rights abuses in some newly elected members of the UNHRC; believes that the Member States should not support the election to the UNHRC of countries which do not uphold respect for human rights;
4. Stresses that it is important to support the independence and integrity of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) so as to ensure that it can continue to exercise its mandate in an effective and impartial manner; calls, in this connection, for the OHCHR to be provided with adequate support and funding; reiterates its support for the Special Procedures and the independent status of mandate holders such as the Special Rapporteurs with a view to enabling them to fulfil their duties with full impartiality, and calls on all states to cooperate with these procedures; regrets the lack of cooperation demonstrated by some member states;
5. Reaffirms the importance of the universality of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), with a view to reaching a full understanding of the human rights situation in all UN member states, and reiterates its support for the second cycle of the review, which focuses especially on the implementation of the recommendations accepted during the first cycle; calls again, however, for the recommendations that were not accepted by states during the first cycle to be reconsidered in the continuation of the UPR process;
6. Stresses the need to ensure that a wide range of stakeholders, notably civil society, participate fully in all aspects of the UNHCR's work, and expresses its concern that severe limitations are hampering civil society's participation in the UPR process; calls on the UN member states, including the EU Member States, to use the UPR as a means of assessing their own human rights situation and to make recommendations in this regard,
7. Calls for the EU to follow up on the UPR recommendations in EU policy dialogues with the countries concerned in order to explore ways and means of implementing the recommendations through country and regional strategies;
8. Welcomes the Initiative for Change launched by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, which is intended to improve and reinforce the global presence of UN human rights offices with the creation of eight regional hubs to protect and promote respect for human rights by working directly with partners to transform the recommendations of the human rights mechanisms into real changes on the ground; calls, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the UNHRC, for an assessment of the Council's impact, including with regard to its mandate and the implementation of its resolutions and other decisions;

Civil and political rights

9. Expresses its concern about the constitutional revisions undertaken in some countries, aimed at changing the limit set on presidential terms of office, an issue which has generated election-related violence in some cases; reaffirms that respect for civil and political rights, including individual and collective freedom of expression, and freedom of assembly and association, are the indicators of a democratic, tolerant and pluralist society;
10. Reiterates that free, genuine elections held periodically on the basis of universal and equal suffrage are a fundamental right that all citizens should enjoy in conformity with the

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 21(3)) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Article 25); reaffirms that the existence of freedom of expression and a vibrant environment conducive to an independent and pluralist civil society are prerequisites for promoting respect for human rights;

11. Takes the view that contemporary digital technologies offer advantages and challenges for the protection of the right to privacy, for the exercise of freedom of expression online around the world and for security, as contemporary digital technologies may be used for extremist and terrorist propaganda and as recruitment channels; welcomes, in this context, the appointment of a UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Privacy in the Digital Age, whose mandate includes surveillance and privacy issues that affect people online or offline;
12. Calls for the UN member states, including the EU Member States, to implement the recommendations of the UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in order to combat the spread of racial, ethnic and xenophobic hatred and incitement over the internet and through social media networks by taking appropriate legislative measures, with full respect for freedom of expression and opinion;

Human rights defenders

13. Condemns the continued harassment and detention of human rights defenders and opposition figures by government forces in a number of third countries; expresses its concern about unfair and restrictive legislation, including restrictions on foreign funding, which is resulting in a shrinking space for civil society activities; calls on all governments to promote and support freedom of the media, civil society organisations and the activities of human rights defenders and to allow them to operate without fear, repression or intimidation;
14. Considers that the continued harassment and detention of human rights defenders and opposition figures by a number of UNHRC members undermines the credibility of the UNHRC; urges the EU and its Member States to promote an initiative at UN level to outline a coherent and comprehensive response to the major challenges that human rights defenders working on women's rights, the defence of environmental, land and indigenous peoples' rights, on corruption and impunity, religion, journalists and other human rights defenders using media, including online and social media, face worldwide and to systematically denounce their assassination;
15. Is extremely concerned about the increasing attacks on humanitarian aid workers and medical facilities; recalls that any such attack is prohibited under international humanitarian law (IHL) and calls on the conflicting parties to comply with the provisions of IHL; stresses the importance of improving the security of aid workers in order to react more effectively to the attacks;

Death penalty

16. Recalls the EU's position on zero tolerance for the death penalty and reiterates its long-standing opposition to the death penalty, torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and punishment in all cases and under all circumstances; underlines the importance of the EU continuing to advance the moratorium on the death penalty and emphasises once again that the abolition of the death penalty contributes to the enhancement of human dignity;

reiterates its position that support for third countries' drug enforcement policy, such as financial assistance, technical assistance and capacity-building, should exclude the use of the death penalty for drug-related offences; expresses its support for the establishment of a Special Rapporteur on human rights and drug policy;

17. Commends the substantial progress made so far, whereby many countries have suspended capital punishment while others have taken legislative measures towards abolishing the death penalty; expresses, nevertheless, its regret concerning the reinstatement of executions in some countries over the past few years; calls on those states which have abolished the death penalty or have a long-standing moratorium on it to uphold their commitments and not to reintroduce it;

Freedom of religion

18. Recalls that freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief is a fundamental human right, as recognised in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and guaranteed by Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; equally, recalls its interrelatedness with other human rights and fundamental freedoms encompassing the right to believe or not to believe, the freedom to practise theistic, non-theistic or atheistic belief alike, and the right to adopt, change and abandon or return to a belief of one's choice; expresses its concern at the fact that some countries still fail to abide by UN standards and use state repression, which may include physical punishment, prison terms, exorbitant fines and even the death penalty, in violation of freedom of religion or belief; is concerned about the increased persecution of minorities because of their religion or beliefs, as well as unlawful damage to their assembly sites; supports the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief on violence committed 'in the name of religion'; calls for the EU to implement its recommendations on interreligious dialogue initiatives;
19. Welcomes the EU's commitment to promoting freedom of religion or belief in international forums, including by supporting the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief; fully supports the EU's practice of taking the lead in the UNHRC and the UNGA on thematic resolutions on this topic; requests concrete action to protect religious minorities, non-believers, apostates and atheists who are victims of blasphemy laws; considers that action should be taken in both international and regional forums by maintaining an open, transparent and regular dialogue with religious associations and communities, as stated in Article 17 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union;

Social and economic rights

20. Recognises the UNHRC's efforts to put all human rights on an equal footing, with the same emphasis, through the establishment of Special Procedure mandate holders in relation to economic, social and cultural rights; highlights, in this connection, the importance of ratification of the Optional Protocol to the ICESCR establishing complaint and inquiry mechanisms;
21. Expresses its profound concern about the rise of extreme poverty, which jeopardises the full enjoyment of all human rights; welcomes, in this connection, the UNHRC Special Rapporteur's report on extreme poverty and human rights (A/HRC/29/31) and supports his proposals for the elimination of extreme poverty; considers it important to address

rising inequalities in order to fight poverty in general, and to promote social and economic rights, notably by facilitating access to food, water, education, health care and housing;

22. Is of the opinion that corruption, tax evasion, mismanagement of public goods and lack of accountability are threats to the equal enjoyment of human rights and undermine democratic processes, the rule of law, the fair administration of justice, public services such as education and basic health services; considers that action to ensure respect for human rights, in particular the rights to information, to freedom of expression and assembly, to an independent judiciary and to democratic participation in public affairs, is instrumental in fighting corruption;
23. Emphasises that minority communities in third countries have specific needs and that their equality should be promoted in all areas of economic, social, political and cultural life;
24. Calls on the UN member states, including the EU Member States, to request that all Special Procedure mandate holders give special attention to issues affecting indigenous women, young people and persons with disabilities and report such issues to the UNHRC; calls on the European External Action Service (EEAS), the Commission and the Member States to support the participation of indigenous peoples in UNHRC sessions; calls on the EEAS and the Member States to actively support the development of the system-wide action plan on indigenous peoples, especially as regards the regular consultation of indigenous peoples;

Business and human rights

25. Supports the effective and comprehensive implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights; urges all UN member states, including the EU Member States, to develop and implement national action plans; considers that trade and human rights can go hand in hand and that the business community has an important role to play in promoting human rights and democracy; reaffirms the importance of EU and multinational enterprises playing a leading role in promoting international standards on business and human rights;
26. Calls on the UN and the EU also to raise with multinational and European enterprises the issue of land grabbing and land rights defenders, who are victims of reprisals including threats, harassment, arbitrary arrest, assault and murder;
27. Welcomes the initiative of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to enhance the Accountability and Remedy Project in order to contribute to a fair and more effective system of domestic law remedies, in particular in cases of gross human rights abuses in the business sector; calls on all governments to fulfil their duties in securing respect for human rights, access to justice for victims who face both practical and legal challenges to access remedies at national and international levels, with regard to human rights violations linked to business;
28. Notes that an open-ended intergovernmental working group (IGWG) on the elaboration of an international legally binding instrument on transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights, established by a UNHRC resolution of 26 June 2014, held its first session in July 2015; calls for the EU to support efforts to align its policies with the OECD guidelines for multinational enterprises and recommends that the EU and its Member States engage constructively in the debate regarding a legally binding international instrument on business and human rights within the UN system;

Migration and refugees

29. Is alarmed by the most serious humanitarian crisis since the Second World War, created by the increasing number of individuals forced to leave their homes as a result of persecution, armed conflict, generalised violence and climate change, and in search of protection and a better life, who are risking their lives by taking dangerous journeys; calls for effective and coordinated international action to address the root causes of migration; calls, furthermore, for more efforts at UN level to address the current and future migratory challenges by ensuring appropriate funding for UNHCR, WFP and other UN bodies involved in providing basic services for refugees inside and outside conflict areas; highlights the importance of the work of the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, including his recommendations;
30. Calls on all countries to adopt a human rights-based approach to migration, which safeguards the rights of migrants and refugees in migration policies and management, paying particular attention to the situation of marginalised and disadvantaged groups of migrants and refugees, such as women and children; calls on all states to address gender-related violence against women and girls, and stresses the importance of designing migration policy from a gender perspective in order to respond to their particular needs;
31. Recalls that all states have an obligation to respect and protect the human rights of all individuals under their jurisdiction, regardless of their nationality or origin and regardless of their immigration status; recalls that a global strategy on migration is closely linked with development and humanitarian policies, including setting up humanitarian corridors and delivering humanitarian visas; reiterates its call for all migration cooperation and readmission agreements with non EU-states to comply with international law; recalls that the return of migrants should only be carried out with full respect for the migrants' rights, based upon informed decisions and only when the protection of their rights is guaranteed in their country; calls on governments to put an end to the arbitrary arrest and arbitrary detention of migrants; expresses its concern about discrimination against and violations of the rights of migrants and refugees; calls, in this connection, on UN member states, including the EU Member States, to respect the right to seek and enjoy asylum;

Climate change and human rights

32. Welcomes the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which covers adaptation, mitigation, technology development and transfer, and capacity building; calls on all signatory states parties to fulfil their commitments; regrets the absence of any reference to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in UNFCCC and calls for all UNFCCC policies and actions to be human rights-based;
33. Recalls that the adverse impact of climate change represents an immediate and potentially irreversible global threat to the full enjoyment of human rights, and that its impact on vulnerable groups whose rights situation is already precarious is considerable; notes with concern that climate-related incidents such as the rise of sea levels and extreme weather changes provoking droughts and floods are expected to lead to even more loss of life, displacement of populations, and food and water shortages;
34. Calls on the international community to address the legal shortfalls in the term 'climate refugee', including its possible international definition;

Women's rights

35. Welcomes the UN Security Council's recent resolution 2242 on women, peace and security, which makes women the central component in all efforts to address global challenges, including rising violent extremism, climate change, migration, sustainable development, peace and security; commends the UN Global Study findings on the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, which stressed the importance of women's leadership and participation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding and that their involvement has improved humanitarian assistance, strengthened peacekeepers' efforts, fostered the conclusion of peace talks and helped to counter violent extremism; calls on the UN and all its member states to take concrete steps to ensure women's autonomy, their meaningful inclusion in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in the peace negotiation and peacebuilding process by increasing their representation at all decision-making levels, including in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms;
36. Expresses its dismay at the fact that since the emergence of violent extremist groups such as Daesh in Syria and Iraq or Boko Haram in West Africa, violence against women has taken on a new dimension as sexual violence has become an integral part of the objectives, ideology and source of revenue of these extremist groups, and has placed a critical new challenge before the international community; calls on all governments and the UN institutions to step up their commitment in combating these abominable crimes and restoring women's dignity so that they receive justice, reparation and adequate support measures;
37. Considers that guaranteeing women's autonomy, by addressing the underlying inequalities between women and men which render women and girls vulnerable during times of conflict, is one way of countering extremism; stresses the need for continuity of education for girls in refugee camps, in conflict areas affected by extreme poverty and environmental extremes such as drought and floods;
38. Stresses the importance of not undermining the 'acquis' of the Beijing Platform for Action regarding access to education and health as a basic human right; emphasises the fact that universal access to sexual and reproductive health services contributes to reducing infant and maternal mortality; points out that family planning, maternal health, easy access to contraception and access to the full range of sexual and reproductive health services are important elements in saving women's lives and helping them rebuild their lives if they have been victims of rape; highlights the need to place these policies at the core of development cooperation with third countries;
39. Underlines the importance of measures strengthening leadership and participation of women at all levels of decision-making; calls on states to secure equal representation for women in public institutions and public life, including special attention to the inclusion of minority women;
40. Invites the Commission, the EEAS and the Vice-President/High Representative (VP/HR) to continue promoting the political and economic empowerment of women and girls by mainstreaming gender equality in all their external policies and programmes, including through structured dialogues with third countries, by publicly raising gender-related issues and by ensuring sufficient resources for this purpose;

Children's rights

41. Supports the EU's efforts to promote children's rights, in particular by contributing to ensuring children's access to water, sanitation, healthcare and education, by ensuring the rehabilitation and reintegration of children enlisted in armed groups, by eliminating child labour, torture, child witchcraft, trafficking, child marriage and sexual exploitation, and by assisting children in armed conflicts and ensuring their access to education in conflict zones and refugee camps;
42. Recalls that the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was adopted in 1989 and is the most widely ratified international human rights treaty, sets out a number of children's rights, including the right to life, to health, to education and to play, as well as the right to family life, to be protected from violence and discrimination and to have their views heard; calls on all signatories to this treaty to honour their obligations;
43. Welcomes the planned global study to be launched by the UN to map out, through monitoring and evaluation analysis, how existing international laws and standards are being implemented on the ground and to assess the concrete possibilities for states to improve their policies and responses; urges all states to support and participate actively in the study;
44. Notes with concern that a number of persons have been sentenced to death for crimes committed while under the age of 18 and have been put to death in countries around the world in 2015 despite the prohibition on the use of the death penalty for juveniles in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child;

Rights of LGBTI persons

45. Expresses its concern regarding the persistence of discriminatory laws and practices and of acts of violence against individuals in various countries, on the basis of their sexual orientation and gender identity; encourages close monitoring of the situation of LGBTI people in countries where anti-LGBTI laws have recently been introduced; expresses its strong concern regarding the so-called 'anti-propaganda' laws limiting freedom of expression and assembly, including in countries on the European continent;
46. Reaffirms its support for the continuing work of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in promoting and protecting the enjoyment of all human rights by LGBTI people, in particular through statements, reports and the Free & Equal campaign; encourages the High Commissioner to continue fighting discriminatory laws and practices; is concerned at restrictions on the fundamental freedoms of LGBTI human rights defenders, and calls for the EU to step up its support for them; notes that the fundamental rights of LGBTI people are more likely to be respected if they have access to all legal institutions;

EU human rights mainstreaming and coherence

47. Calls on the EU to promote the universality and indivisibility of human rights, including civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, in accordance with Article 21 of the Treaty on European Union and the General Provisions on the Union's External Action;
48. Reiterates its call for the EU to adopt a rights-based approach and to integrate respect for human rights into trade, investment policies, public services, development cooperation, and its common security and defence policy; stresses also that the EU's human rights policy should ensure that its internal and external policies are coherent, in line with the EU Treaty obligation;

49. Reiterates, furthermore, the importance of the EU actively and consistently engaging in UN human rights mechanisms, in particular with the Third Committee, the General Assembly (UNGA) and the UNHRC; acknowledges the efforts of the EEAS, the EU Delegations in New York and Geneva and the Member States to increase EU coherence on human rights issues at UN level by means of timely and substantive consultation and to deliver a ‘one-voice message’; encourages the EU to increase its efforts to make its voice heard, including by intensifying the growing practice of cross-regional initiatives and by co-sponsoring and taking the lead on resolutions; reiterates its call for stronger visibility of EU action in all multilateral forums;
50. Requests the EU Special Representative for Human Rights to continue to enhance the effectiveness, coherence and visibility of the EU’s human rights policy in the context of the UNHRC and in further developing close cooperation with the OHCHR and the Special Procedures;
51. Strongly emphasises the need to improve the preparation and coordination of EU positions for the UNHRC sessions and to address the issue of consistency between the EU’s external and internal human rights policy;
52. Recalls the importance of keeping the institutionalised practice of sending parliamentary delegations to the UNHRC and the UNGA;
53. Calls for a more principled and non-selective engagement of the EU Member States at the UNHRC;

Drones and autonomous weapons

54. Reiterates its call on the EU Council to develop an EU common position on the use of armed drones, giving the utmost importance to respect for human rights and international humanitarian law and addressing issues such as the legal framework, proportionality, accountability, the protection of civilians and transparency; urges the EU once again to ban the production, development, and use of fully autonomous weapons which enable strikes to be carried out without human intervention; insists that human rights should be part of all dialogues with third countries on counter-terrorism;

Counter-terrorism

55. Takes positive note of the counter-terrorism guidance document drafted by the EEAS and the Commission with the aim of ensuring respect for human rights in the planning and implementation of counter-terrorism assistance projects with third countries; recalls, in this connection, that respect for fundamental rights and freedoms is the foundation of successful counter-terrorism policies, including the use of digital surveillance technologies; stresses the need to develop effective communication strategies for countering terrorist and extremist propaganda and recruitment methods, notably online;

Democratisation

56. Recommends that the EU step up its efforts to develop a more comprehensive approach to democratisation processes, of which free and fair elections are only one dimension, in order to contribute positively to the strengthening of democratic institutions; considers that the sharing of transition best practices in the framework of the enlargement and neighbourhood policies should be used to support and consolidate other democratisation processes worldwide;

Development and human rights

57. Stresses the importance of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 on peace and justice of Agenda 2030, which should be one of the priorities for all external and internal action, especially when it comes to development cooperation financing;

Sports and human rights

58. Is seriously concerned that some major sports events are being hosted by authoritarian states where human rights violations occur; calls for the UN and the EU Member States to raise this issue and engage with national sports federations, corporate actors and civil society organisations on the practicalities of their participation in such events, including with regard to the FIFA World Cup in Russia in 2018 and in Qatar 2022, and the Olympic Games in Beijing in 2022;

International Criminal Court

59. Reiterates its full support for the work of the ICC in its role of ending the impunity of the perpetrators of the most serious crimes of concern to the international community and to provide justice for the victims of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide; remains vigilant regarding any attempts to undermine its legitimacy or independence; urges the EU and its Member States to cooperate with the Court and provide it with strong diplomatic, political and financial support, including in the UN; calls for the EU, its Member States and its Special Representatives to actively promote the ICC, the enforcement of its decisions and the fight against impunity for Rome Statute crimes, including by strengthening and expanding its relationship with the Security Council and by promoting universal ratification of the Rome Statute and the Kampala amendments;

Countries under the Universal Periodic Review (UPR)

Georgia

60. Welcomes Georgia's membership of the UNHRC and the recent UPR on Georgia; notes the legislative reforms that have resulted in some progress and improvements with regard to the justice and law enforcement sector, the Prosecutor's Office, the fight against ill-treatment, children's rights, the protection of privacy and personal data and internally displaced persons (IDPs);
61. Notes, however, that further efforts are needed with regard to full independence of the judiciary and to ill-treatment, especially regarding pre-trial detention and rehabilitation of victims, to accountability for abuses by law enforcement agencies, to investigations into past abuses by government officials and to minorities and women's rights; stresses the responsibility of the government under international human rights law to protect all children from violence, and calls for scrutiny of all the children's charitable institutions; calls for provision to be made for the rehabilitation of victims; remains concerned about freedom of expression and the media and the lack of access by monitors to the occupied regions of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia where human rights violations remain widespread; and calls on the Georgian Government to take appropriate measures with a view to ensuring a follow-up to the recommendations made in the UPR process;

Lebanon

62. Commends Lebanon for the open border and reception policy which it had for years regarding refugees from Palestine, Iraq and Syria, stresses that this country, in which one person out of four is a refugee, has the highest per capita concentration of refugees worldwide, and calls on the European Union to allocate more resources and to work closely with the Lebanese authorities to help the country uphold the protection of the rights of refugees and asylum seekers; is concerned, in this context, about the reportedly significant number of cases of child and/or forced marriages among Syrian refugees; encourages the Lebanese Government to consider a reform of the law regulating entry into, stay in and exit from Lebanon;
63. Supports the recommendations of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in calling for measures to raise awareness among women migrant domestic workers of their human rights under the CEDAW Convention, to which Lebanon is a state party; emphasises, in particular, the need to abolish the 'Kafala system' and ensure effective access to justice for women migrant domestic workers, including by guaranteeing their safety and residence during legal and administrative procedures relating to their status;

Mauritania

64. Stresses that while progress has been made by the Mauritanian Government in taking legislative measures aimed at fighting all forms of slavery and slavery-like practices, the lack of effective implementation contributes to the persistence of such practices; calls on the authorities to enact an anti-slavery law, to initiate nationwide, systematic and regular collection of disaggregated data on all forms of slavery and to conduct a thorough evidence-based study on the history and nature of slavery in order to eradicate the practice;
65. Urges the Mauritanian authorities to allow freedom of speech and assembly, in accordance with international conventions and Mauritania's own domestic law; calls also for the release of Biram Dah Abeid, Bilal Ramdane and Djiby Sow so that they may continue their non-violent campaign against the continuation of slavery without fear of harassment or intimidation;

Myanmar

66. Welcomes the holding of competitive elections on 8 November 2015, an important milestone in the country's democratic transition; takes positive note of the expression of support by Myanmar's voters for the continued democratisation of the country; notes with concern, however, the constitutional framework for these elections, under which 25 % of the seats in the parliament are reserved for the military; recognises the progress made so far as regards human rights, while identifying a number of remaining areas of major concern, including the rights of minorities and freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly;
67. Condemns the severe and widespread discrimination against the Rohingya, which is exacerbated by the fact that this community lacks legal status, and by the rise of hate speech against non-Buddhists; calls for full, transparent and independent investigations into all reports of human rights violations against the Rohingya and considers that the four laws adopted by the parliament in 2015 aimed at 'protecting race and religion' include discriminatory aspects as regards gender; repeats its request and expresses its concern that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has not been permitted

to establish an office in the country; stresses the need for a full sustainability impact assessment to be carried out before negotiations on the EU-Myanmar investment agreement are finalised;

Nepal

68. Welcomes the entry into force on 20 September 2015 of Nepal's new constitution, which should lay the foundations for the country's future political stability and economic development; hopes that the remaining concerns around the political representation of minorities, including the Dalits, and citizenship laws will be addressed in the near future;
69. Regrets the widespread lack of accountability for human rights abuses committed by both sides during the civil war despite the adoption in May 2014 of the Truth, Reconciliation and Disappearance Act; urges the Government of Nepal to accede to the International Convention on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; condemns the limitations placed on the fundamental freedoms of Tibetan refugees; urges India to lift its unofficial blockade on Nepal's economy which, coupled with the devastating earthquake of April 2015, is causing a humanitarian crisis and pushing almost one million more Nepalis into a poverty impasse;

Oman

70. Commends Oman for the setting-up of the governmental National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and the invitation which allowed the ground-breaking visit of the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to peaceful assembly in September 2014; expresses the hope that these constructive steps will lead to a more intensive engagement by Oman with UN human rights representatives and independent human rights organisations;
71. Encourages Oman to take the necessary steps to alleviate what the UN Special Rapporteur described as a pervasive climate of fear and intimidation in the country; remains concerned about, and calls on the government to reconsider the ban on all political parties; calls on the EU Institutions and the EU Member States to offer technical and legal assistance to help Oman create a safe and enabling environment for civil society organisations;

Rwanda

72. Expresses its concern about the human rights situation in Rwanda, including the restrictions on freedom of expression and association, the shrinking of the democratic space for opposition political parties and independent civil society activities, and the absence of a conducive environment for the independence of the judiciary; calls on the Rwandan Government to open up a democratic space in which all segments of society may operate freely;
73. Is concerned by the recent constitutional changes allowing the incumbent President to run for a third term; calls on the Government of Rwanda to uphold the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance;

South Sudan

74. Welcomes the Peace Agreement signed by the warring parties on 28 August 2015 to end the civil war, which includes transitional power-sharing, security arrangements and the establishment of a hybrid court to try all crimes committed since the conflict started;

recalls that the conflict has claimed thousands of lives and caused the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people and refugees;

75. Calls on all parties to refrain from committing human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law, including those amounting to international crimes, such as extrajudicial killings, ethnically targeted violence, conflict-related sexual violence, including rape, as well as gender-based violence, recruitment and use of children, enforced disappearances and arbitrary arrests and detention;
76. Welcomes the UNHRC resolution of June 2015 and the deployment of an OHCHR mission to monitor and report on the situation of human rights in South Sudan; calls on the Human Rights Council to support the appointment of a Special Rapporteur on South Sudan, with a mandate to monitor and publicly report on violations, assist the government in implementing the recommendations to be made by the OHCHR mission, and make recommendations for achieving effective accountability;

Venezuela

77. Expresses its concerns about the dire human rights situation in the country as a result of the worsened economic, political and social climate in recent years; reiterates that freedom of expression, an independent judiciary and the rule of law are vital components of any democratic society; calls on the Venezuelan authorities to immediately release the opposition leaders and all peaceful protesters arbitrarily detained for exercising their right to freedom of expression and fundamental rights;
78. Welcomes the holding of the elections on 6 December 2015 and the installation of the new National Assembly; condemns any attempts to undermine the full enforcement of the election results expressing the will of the Venezuelan people, such as the suspension of some democratically elected members; recalls that the new government will have to tackle a wide range of human rights issues, such as impunity, accountability for extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrest and detention, fair trials, the independence of the judiciary, freedom of assembly and association, and media freedom; stresses that Venezuela's membership of the UNHRC for the three-year term beginning on 1 January 2016 brings with it a special responsibility to respect human rights;

Syria

79. Expresses its concerns about the dramatic security and humanitarian situation in Syria; emphasises the importance of the work carried out by the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria; condemns the deliberate targeting of civilians, indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks, attacks on civilians and protected cultural heritage objects, and the punitive imposition of sieges and blockades; emphasises the need for special attention and support to be given to women victims of violence, women's organisations and their participation in humanitarian aid and conflict resolution; calls for the EU and the Member States to help make sure that the commission of inquiry is adequately funded to fulfil its mandate, which consists in establishing the facts and circumstances of all serious human rights violations committed, and where possible, identifying those responsible with a view to ensuring that the perpetrators of violations, including violations that may constitute crimes against humanity, are held accountable, including by referral to the International Criminal Court;

80. Reiterates its conviction that a sustainable solution to the crisis in Syria can be achieved only through an inclusive political settlement leading to a genuine political transition that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people and enables them independently and democratically to determine their own future; welcomes the final declaration of 30 October 2015 on the results of the Syria Talks in Vienna; welcomes the adoption of UN Security Council resolution 2254 (2015) on 18 December 2015;
81. Is alarmed at the persecution of religious and ethnic minorities in Syria, who are forced to convert and pay tribute, and are attacked, injured, sold into slavery and harvested for organs solely because of their faith;

Burundi

82. Expresses deep concern about the targeted attacks on human rights defenders, journalists and their family members; strongly condemns political violence, summary executions and other human rights violations; urges the Burundian authorities to end these violations and abuses as a matter of critical and urgent priority and to conduct impartial and independent investigations with a view to bringing those responsible to justice and providing victims with redress;
83. Remains deeply concerned about the humanitarian impact of the crisis on the civilian population in the country and region as a whole; calls for the EU to continue to work towards a consensual outcome between the government and the opposition in order to re-establish an inclusive and democratic political system;
84. Welcomes the holding of a Special Session of the Human Rights Council on 17 December 2015 on preventing further deterioration of the human rights situation in Burundi, but regrets the delay in holding it; calls for the expeditious deployment of the mission by independent experts, and urges the Burundian authorities to fully cooperate with the mission;

Saudi Arabia

85. Remains deeply concerned about the systematic violation of human rights in the country; is seriously concerned about the alarming rate at which court rulings ordered and carried out the death penalty in Saudi Arabia in 2015; deplores the mass executions committed in the last weeks; calls on Saudi Arabia to impose a moratorium on the death penalty;
86. Calls on the Saudi authorities to release all prisoners of conscience, including the 2015 Sakharov Laureate, Raif Badawi; calls for the EU to closely follow his particular case;
87. Reiterates that UNHRC members should be elected from among states which uphold respect for human rights, the rule of law and democracy, which is currently not the case in Saudi Arabia; calls on the Saudi authorities to cooperate fully with the UNHRC Special Procedures and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights;

Belarus

88. Welcomes the release of the remaining political prisoners in August 2015, and calls on the Belarusian Government to rehabilitate the released political prisoners and fully restore their civic and political rights; expresses its profound concern at the continued restrictions to freedom of expression and the freedoms of association and peaceful assembly; condemns the harassment of independent and opposition journalists and the harassment

and detention of human rights activists; urges Belarus to join a global moratorium on the execution of the death penalty as a first step towards its permanent abolition; calls on the government to fully cooperate with the Special Rapporteur and commit to engage in reforms to protect human rights, including by implementing the recommendations made by the Special Rapporteur and other human rights mechanisms;

Middle East Peace Process

89. Takes note of the VP/HR and Council conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process adopted on 18 January 2016; fully agrees with the Council that compliance with international humanitarian law and international human rights law by all, including accountability, is a cornerstone for peace and security and that Israel's settlements are illegal under international law and undermine the viability of the two-state solution; deeply regrets the resignation of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories, Makarim Wibisono;

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90. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the EU Special Representative on Human Rights, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the UN Security Council, the UN Secretary-General, the President of the 69th UN General Assembly, the President of the UN Human Rights Council, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Secretary-General of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.