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**PAKISTAN'S INTERNATIONAL
HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTING OBLIGATIONS**

TRAINING PACKAGE

MODULE 6

**Pakistan and the Special Procedures
of the UN Human Rights Council**

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1. INTRODUCTION TO THE MODULE

About:

This Training Module provides sequentially presented instructional units designed to support participants' absorption of substantive and procedural information on the Special Procedures of the UN Human Rights Council. The module provides information, concepts and reference to the Pakistani context that enables target trainees and instructors to emerge from the training with not just information but a keen appreciation for its application within both Pakistan and the international human rights system.

Scope and usage:

The training module has been designed to facilitate participant-trainees during training workshops conducted by the EU-funded Promotion of Human Rights in Pakistan Program (Huqooq-e-Pakistan). A digital copy of the training module will also be provided to the training participants. The training module covers each topic area extensively, enabling participant-trainees to go beyond the training sessions, and educate themselves about the topic areas extensively. Each section of the training module is followed by a small exercise so that learners can test their own knowledge retention. The modules have been specifically tailored with respect to the Pakistani context. Extensive referencing and pointers for additional reading ensure that the training modules can serve as definitive reference materials on the topic areas that they cover.

Beneficiaries:

The primary beneficiaries of the training modules are the participant trainees of the H-e-P Training & Capacity Development Program, which include officials from the Federal Ministry of Human Rights, Provincial Human Rights Departments and Treaty Implementation Cells. These modules can also be used by National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), UN Agencies, donor-funded technical assistance initiatives and educational institutions in Pakistan to deliver trainings on the subject-area as and when required. Any individual, whether or not s(he) has a role to play in the reporting process, can benefit from these training modules as they are standalone documents which are designed to be self-explanatory for individual learning.

2. INTRODUCTION TO UN SPECIAL PROCEDURES & MANDATES

2.1. Overview

“Special Procedures” is the general name given to the mechanisms established by the former Commission on Human Rights and later assumed by the **UN Human Rights Council** to

examine, monitor, advise and publicly report on human rights situations in specific countries or territories (**country mandates**), or on major phenomena of human rights violations worldwide (**thematic mandates**). The Special Procedures mandate-holders are **independent human rights experts** which serve as a core element of the United Nations human rights system, covering the entire spectrum of human rights: civil, cultural, economic, political, and social.

The Special Procedures mandate-holders of the UN Human Rights Council are independent human rights experts with mandates to report and advise on human rights from a thematic or country-specific perspective. Special Procedures mandate-holders are either individuals (known as "**Special Rapporteurs**" or "**Independent Experts**" or "**Representative of the Secretary General**" or "**Special Representative of the Secretary General**") or groups of individuals (known as "**Working Groups**"). These Working Groups commonly comprise of five members — one member each from the five regional groupings of the United Nations:

- 1) Africa
- 2) Asia Pacific
- 3) Latin America and the Caribbean
- 4) Eastern Europe
- 5) Western Group

All Special Rapporteurs, Independent Experts and members of the Working Groups are appointed by the Human Rights Council. They are supported by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR) in performing the following functions:

- *Receive and analyse information on human rights situations provided by various sources on an ongoing basis.*
- *Network and share information with partners, both governmental and non-governmental, within and outside the United Nations.*
- *Seek — often urgently — clarification from Governments on alleged violations and, where required, request Governments to implement protection measures to guarantee or restore the enjoyment of human rights.*
- *Raise awareness about specific human rights situations and phenomena, and threats to and violations of human rights.*
- *When specific circumstances so warrant, communicate their concerns through the media and other public statements.*
- *Undertake country visits to assess human rights situations pertaining to their respective mandates and make recommendations to Governments with a view to improving those situations.*
- *Report and make recommendations to the Human Rights Council and, where relevant to their mandates, to the General Assembly (and in some cases to the Security Council)*

on: regular activities under their mandate; field visits; and specific thematic trends and phenomena.

- *Contribute thematic studies to the development of authoritative norms and standards for the subject area of the mandate and provide legal expertise on specific issues.*

All Special Procedures report annually to the Human Rights Council while most mandate-holders also submit reports to the UN General Assembly. They are not United Nations staff members and do not receive any financial remuneration. A mandate-holder's tenure in a given function is limited to a maximum of six years.

As of March 2020, the special procedures system consists of 56 mandates, of which 44 are thematic and 12 are country specific. These mandates are occupied by a total of 80 mandate-holders. The Human Rights Council has not established any new mandate since June 2017.¹

2.2. History of UN Special Procedures

In the early days of the United Nations, the Commission on Human Rights – the predecessor of the Human Rights Council – focused on elaborating human rights standards. The Economic and Social Council had passed a resolution stating that the Commission had “no power to take any action in regard to any complaints concerning human rights”².

However in 1965, the Commission on Human Rights was faced with a number of individual petitions from South Africa and came under considerable pressure to deal with them. As a result, in 1967 the Commission departed from previous practice and established an ad-hoc working group of experts to investigate the situation of human rights in Southern Africa³.

The ad-hoc working group can be considered as the first Special Procedure of the Commission on Human Rights. Following the 1973 coup in Chile against President Allende by General Augusto Pinochet, the Commission established an ad-hoc working group in 1975 to inquire into the situation of human rights in Chile. In 1979, this working group was replaced by a special rapporteur and two experts to study the fate of the disappeared in Chile.

This led to the establishment of the first thematic Special Procedure in 1980: the Working Group on Enforced Disappearances to deal with the question of enforced disappearances throughout the world.⁴ Ten years later, in 1990, there were six thematic mandates covering enforced disappearances, extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, religious intolerance, mercenaries, torture and sale of children. Since then, many new mandates have

¹ *Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General 2020 (A/HRC/43/64)*

² *Economic and Social Council Resolution 75 (V) (1947).*

³ *Commission on Human Rights Resolution 2 (XXIII)*

⁴ *Commission on Human Rights Resolution 20 (XXXVI)).*

been established to deal with human rights challenges in various parts of the world. They now cover all regions and rights: civil, cultural, economic, political, and social.

2.3. Thematic Special Procedures

The following are the 44 Thematic Special Procedures that are currently active and have been established by the UN Human Rights Council:

WORKING GROUPS

- 1 Working Group on people of African descent
- 2 Working Group on Arbitrary Detention
- 3 Working Group on enforced or involuntary disappearances
- 4 Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination
- 5 Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises
- 6 Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice

INDEPENDENT EXPERTS

- 7 Independent Expert on the enjoyment of human rights of persons with albinism
- 8 Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order
- 9 Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights
- 10 Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity
- 11 Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons

⁵ *Thematic Special Procedures are mandated to investigate the situation of human rights in all parts of the world, irrespective of whether a particular government is a party to any of the relevant human rights treaties. This requires them to taken the measures necessary to monitor and respond quickly to allegations of human rights violations against individuals or groups, either globally or in a specific country or territory, and to report on their activities. In the case of country mandates, mandate-holders are called upon to take full account of all human rights (civil, cultural, economic, political and social) unless directed otherwise.*

12 Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity

SPECIAL RAPORTEURS

13 Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context

14 Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography

15 Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights

16 Special Rapporteur on the right to development

17 Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities

18 Special Rapporteur on the right to education

19 Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment

20 Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions

21 Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights

22 Special Rapporteur on the right to food

23 Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association

24 Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression

25 Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief

26 Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes

27 Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health

28 Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders

29 Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers

30 Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples

- 31 Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons
- 32 Special Rapporteur on the elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and their family members
- 33 Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants
- 34 Special Rapporteur on minority issues
- 35 Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy
- 36 Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance
- 37 Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and its consequences
- 38 Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights while countering terrorism
- 39 Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment
- 40 Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children
- 41 Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation & guarantees of non-recurrence
- 42 Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights
- 43 Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences
- 44 Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation

2.4. Country-Specific Special Procedures

The following is a list of twelve country-specific special procedures that are currently active:

INDEPENDENT EXPERTS

- 1 Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Central African Republic
- 2 Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Mali
- 3 Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia
- 4 Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan

SPECIAL RAPORTEURS

- 5 Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus
- 6 Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia
- 7 Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea
- 8 Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea
- 9 Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran
- 10 Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar
- 11 Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967
- 12 Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic

[CLICK HERE](#) to access the Directory of Special Procedures Mandate Holders.

2.5. Test Your Knowledge



- 1) The Special Procedures mandate-holders of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) are....
 - a) ... Ambassadors of Human Rights Council's elected members.
 - b) ... Independent Human Rights Experts appointed by the UN Human Rights Council.
 - c) ... Employees of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.
- 2) Which UN body appoints the Special Procedures mandate-holders?
 - a) UN General Assembly
 - b) UN Security Council
 - c) UN Human Rights Council
 - d) Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
- 3) Individuals who are appointed as UN Special Procedures mandate-holders are known as:
 - a) Independent Experts
 - b) Special Rapporteurs
 - c) Representative of the Secretary General
 - d) Special Representative of the Secretary General
 - e) All of the above
- 4) Which of the following is a thematic special procedure?
 - a) Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia
 - b) Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan
 - c) Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus
 - d) Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights
- 4) How many special procedures mandates does the UN Special Procedures system consists of?
 - a) 45
 - b) 56
 - c) 44
 - d) 12
- 5) What is the total number of thematic special procedures?
 - a) 100
 - b) 12
 - c) 15
 - d) 44

ANSWER KEY

1. Option B

The Special Procedure mandate holders of the UN Human Rights Council are Independent Human Rights Experts. See Section 2 and 3.

2. Option C

Special Procedure mandate-holders are appointed by the UN Human Rights Council. See Section 2 and 3.

3. Option E

Individuals who are appointed as UN Special Procedures mandate-holders are given as one of the following titles:

- *Independent Experts*
- *Special Rapporteurs*
- *Representative of the Secretary General*
- *Special Representative of the Secretary General*

For more details, see Section 2.1

4. Option B

As of March 2020, the special procedures system consists of 56 mandates, of which 44 are thematic and 12 are country specific. See Section 2.1, 2.3 and 2.4

5. Option D

As of March 2020, the special procedures system consists 44 thematic and 12 country-specific mandates. See Section 2.1, 2.3 and 2.4

3. APPOINTMENT OF SPECIAL PROCEDURES MANDATE-HOLDERS

3.1. The Nomination & Appointment Process

The parameters related to the selection and appointment of Special Procedures mandate-holders are outlined in resolutions 5/1 and 16/21 of the UN Human Rights Council.⁶ The candidates for the positions of mandate-holders can be nominated by Governments, the Regional Groups operating within the United Nations system, international organisations or their offices, non-governmental organizations, other human rights bodies and individuals. National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) that comply with the Paris Principles may also nominate candidates. Individual candidates and candidates nominated by entities are required to submit an application package for each specific mandate.⁷

All applications are reviewed by the Consultative Group of the Human Rights Council⁸ reviews which then conducts interviews of shortlisted candidates. The Consultative Group submits its report to the President of the Human Rights Council containing a list of candidates who possess the highest qualifications for the mandates in question and meet the criteria. The President of the Council identifies an appropriate candidate for each vacancy on the basis of the recommendations of the Consultative Group and following broad consultations through the regional coordinators. A list of candidates is presented to members states and observers. The appointment process of the mandate holders is completed upon the the subsequent approval of members of the Human Rights Council.

A mandate-holder's tenure in a given function, whether it is a thematic or country mandate, is limited to a maximum of six years. Till date, **seven Pakistani citizens** have served as mandate-holders of the UN Special Procedures. ([See Section 7](#))



DID YOU KNOW?

H.E. Masood Khan of Pakistan was appointed by the Asia-Pacific Regional Group as a member of the Consultative Group of the Human Rights Council from 2007 to 2008.

⁶ A/HRC/RES/5/1 (Institution-building of the United Nations Human Rights Council)

A/HRC/RES/16/21 (Review of the work and functioning of the Human Rights Council)

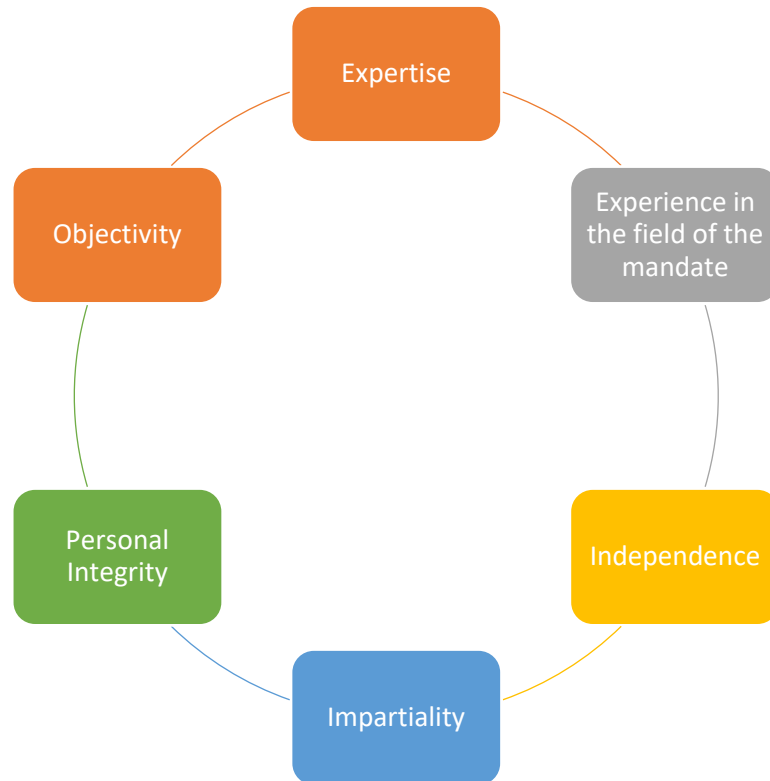
⁷ Paragraph 22 (b) of the annex of resolution A/HRC/RES/16/21

⁸ The Consultative Group of the UNHRC consists of five members (one from each of the Regional Groups). At the beginning of the annual cycle of the HRC, Regional Groups are invited to appoint a member each for the Consultative Group.

3.2. Eligibility Criteria & Requirements

3.2.1. General Criteria

The Annexure of the Human Rights Council Resolution 5/1⁹ outlines the following general criteria which is of paramount importance while nominating, selecting and appointing special procedures mandate-holders:



3.2.2. Technical & Objective Requirements

The UN Human Rights Council adopted the following ‘Technical and Objective Requirements for eligible candidates for mandate-holders’¹⁰ on 27 September 2007:

⁹ A/HRC/RES/5/1 (Adopted on 18 June 2007)

¹⁰ A/HRC/DEC/6/102 (Follow-up to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1)

1) Qualifications

- *Relevant educational qualifications or equivalent professional experience in the field of human rights; good communication skills in one of the official languages of the United Nations.*

2) Relevant Expertise

- *Knowledge of international human rights instruments, norms and principles; as well as knowledge of institutional mandates related to the United Nations or other international or regional organizations' work in the area of human rights; proven work experience in the field of human rights.*

3) Established Competence

- *Nationally, regionally or internationally recognized competence related to human rights.*

4) Flexibility, Readiness & Availability

- *Flexibility, readiness and availability of time to perform effectively the functions of the mandate and to respond to its requirements, including attending Human Rights Council sessions.*

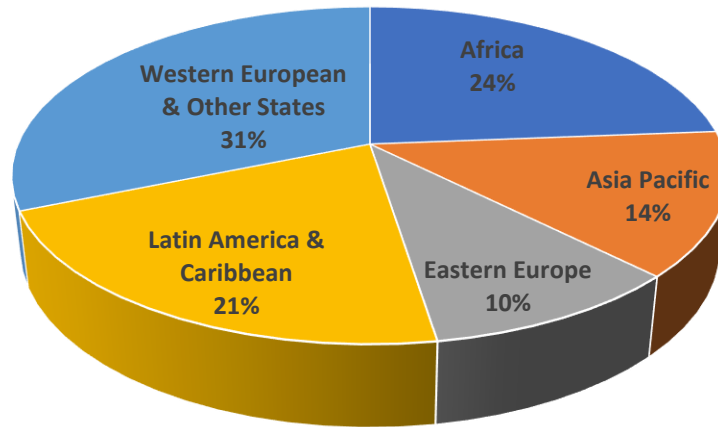
3.2.3. Regional representation and gender-inclusivity

During the process of selection and appointment of special procedures mandate-holders, due consideration is also given to gender balance, equitable geographic representation and an appropriate representation of different legal systems.

As of 31 December 2019, 23.75 per cent of mandate holders came from Member States of the United Nations belonging to the African Group, 13.75 per cent from the AsiaPacific Group, 10 per cent from the Eastern European Group, 21.25 per cent from the Latin American and Caribbean Group and 31.25 per cent from the Group of Western European and Other States (See Fig. 1). One Pakistani citizen currently holds a special procedure mandate as the “Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran”.¹¹

¹¹ Mr. Javaid Rehman (Appointed at HRC 38 in June 2018). The mandate was formerly held by the late Asma Jahangir from 2016 to 2018.

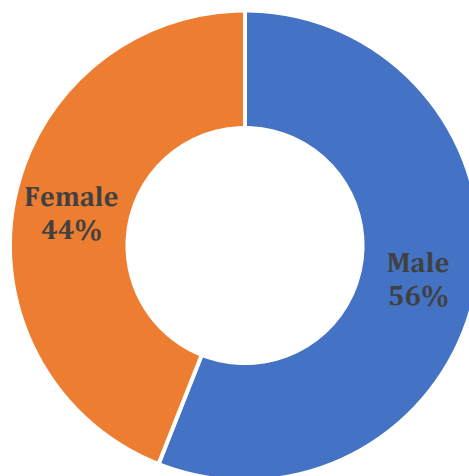
Fig. 1: REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF MANDATE HOLDERS IN PERCENTAGE



Source: UNHRC, 2020 Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General, April 2020, A/HRC/43/64

As of April 2020, 44 percent of mandate holders are female, while 56 percent are male (See Fig. 02). Interestingly, five out of the seven Pakistani citizens that have been appointment as special procedure mandate-holders till date are women.

Fig. 2: GENDER BALANCE OF MANDATE HOLDERS



Source: UNHRC, 2020 Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General, April 2020, A/HRC/43/64

3.3. Code of Conduct & Manual of the Special Procedures

During their work, the Special Procedures mandate-holders are guided by the Code of “Conduct for Special Procedures Mandate-holders”, “Manual of the Special Procedures” and the “Internal Advisory Procedure.”

Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct for Special Procedures Mandate-holders¹² was adopted by the Human Rights Council in 2007. The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to enhance the effectiveness of the system of special procedures by defining the standards of ethical behaviour and professional conduct that special procedures mandate-holders of the Human Rights Council shall observe whilst discharging their mandates. The mandate-holders are expected to:

- a) act in an independent capacity, and exercise their functions in accordance with their mandate, through a professional, impartial assessment of facts based on internationally recognized human rights standards, and free from any kind of extraneous influence, incitement, pressure, threat or interference.
- b) focus exclusively on the implementation of their mandate, constantly keeping in mind the fundamental obligations of truthfulness, loyalty and independence pertaining to their mandate;
- c) uphold the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity, meaning, in particular, though not exclusively, probity, impartiality, equity, honesty and good faith;
- d) neither seek nor accept instructions from any Government, individual, governmental or non-governmental organization or pressure group whatsoever;
- e) refrain from using their office or knowledge gained from their functions for private gain, financial or otherwise, or for the gain and/or detriment of any family member, close associate, or third party.

Manual of Operations of the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council

The Manual of the special procedures, produced by the mandate-holders, aims to provide guidance to mandate-holders in the performance of their roles. It also seeks to facilitate a better understanding of their work by all other stakeholders. The Manual tries to reflect good practices and to assist mandate-holders in their efforts to promote and protect human rights. The Manual was originally adopted at the sixth annual meeting of special procedures mandate-holders in 1999. Since that time it has been revised to reflect the changing structure of the United Nations human rights machinery, new developments in

¹² *The Code of Conduct for Special Procedures Mandate-holders is available at:*
<https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/SP/CodeOfConduct.pdf>

relation to mandates and the evolving working methods of mandate-holders. For its latest revision, input was sought from Governments, NGOs and other stakeholders. The Manual is subject to periodic review and operates in consonance with the provisions of the Code of Conduct.¹³

Internal Advisory Procedure

Mandate-holders also established an Internal Advisory Procedure to review practices and working methods, which allows any stakeholder to bring issues relating to working methods and conduct to the attention of the Coordination Committee. The procedure was devised to enhance the independence and effectiveness of Special Procedures and cooperation by States, and to contribute to self-regulation of the special procedures system and individual mandate holders.¹⁴

4. FUNCTIONING OF SPECIAL PROCEDURES

4.1. Mandate

The responsibilities of each special procedure are outlined in the resolutions of the Human Rights Council that create or extend its mandate. Thematic mandates are renewed every three years and country mandates annually, unless otherwise decided by the Human Rights Council.¹⁵

Mandate-holders serve in their personal capacity for a maximum of six years and do not receive salaries or any other financial compensation for their work.

4.2. Operational Tools

With the aim of fulfilling their mandates, Special procedures mandate-holders perform a number of key functions, including:

1.1.1. Communications

Special procedures mechanisms can intervene directly with Governments on allegations of violations of human rights that come within their mandates by issuing communications, such as urgent appeals and letters of allegation. The intervention can relate to a human rights violation that has already occurred, is ongoing, or which has a high risk of occurring.

¹³ The Manual can be accessed at https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/SP/Manual_Operations2008.pdf

¹⁴ The Internal Advisory Procedure can be accessed at:
https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/SP/IAP_WorkingMethods.pdf

¹⁵ See resolution 5/1, annex, para. 60, and “Terms of office of special procedure mandate-holders” (A/HRC/PRST/8/2)

The process involves sending a letter to the concerned State identifying the facts of the allegation, applicable international human rights norms and standards, the concerns and questions of the mandate-holder(s), and a request for follow-up action.

URGENT APPEALS	LETTERS OF ALLEGATION
<p><i>These are sent when the alleged violations are time-sensitive in terms of involving loss of life, life-threatening situations or either imminent or ongoing damage of a very grave nature to victims.</i></p>	<p><i>These are sent when the urgent appeal procedure does not apply, to communicate information and request clarification about alleged human rights violations.</i></p>

Communications may deal with **individual cases**, general patterns and trends of **human rights violations**, cases affecting a particular group or community, or the content of draft or existing **legislation, policy** or **practice** considered not to be fully compatible with international human rights standards. In some cases, communications are also sent to **inter-governmental organisations** or **non-state actors**. Mandate-holders may also send *joint communications* when a case falls within the scope of more than one mandate.

The decision of whether or not to intervene with a Government is left to the discretion of special procedure mandate-holders and will depend on criteria established by them, as well as the criteria set out in the Code of Conduct. The criteria generally relates to:

- Reliability of the source and the credibility of information received;
- Details provided by the source;
- Scope of Special Procedure’s mandate.



DID YOU KNOW?

Communications can be sent by mandate-holders irrespective of whether an alleged victim has exhausted domestic remedies and whether the concerned State has ratified an international or regional human rights instruments.

Mandate-holders are also required to take into account, in a comprehensive and timely manner, information provided by the State concerned on situations relevant to their mandate.

In their information-gathering activities, mandate-holders are expected to:

- Be guided by the principles of discretion, transparency, impartiality and even-handedness;
- Preserve the confidentiality of sources of testimonies if divulging them could cause harm to the individuals involved;
- Rely on objective and dependable facts based on evidentiary standards that are appropriate to the non-judicial character of the reports and conclusions they are required to write; and,
- Give representatives of the concerned State the opportunity to comment on their assessments and to respond to the allegations made against the State. The State's written summary responses are also to be annexed to the mandate-holder's report(s)

[CLICK HERE](#) for more information on Communications by the Special Procedures mechanisms.

Special procedures submit Communications Reports to the Human Rights Council containing summaries of the communications sent since the last reporting period . Since September 2011, the text of all communications sent and replies received can be accessed through these periodic reports. Some mandates have continued to publish annually, their observations on replies received. These can be accessed at:

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/SP/Pages/CommunicationsreportsSP.aspx>

In 2019, Special Procedures mandate-holders transmitted 669 communications, 529 of which were sent jointly, to 151 States and 54 non-State actors. The communications covered 1,249 individuals, 268 of whom were identified as female. A total of 425 replies, of which 390 were substantive replies, were received in 2019 (this includes replies to communications sent before 2019).

1.1.2. Country Visits

Country or field visits (or fact-finding missions) are an important tool available to special procedures mandate-holders. Mandate-holders typically send a letter to a Government requesting to visit the country, and, if the Government agrees, an invitation to visit is extended. Some countries have issued "standing invitations", which means that they are, in principle, prepared to receive a visit from any special procedures mandate-holder. Country visits are guided by the provisions contained in the Code of Conduct (*see section 3.3*) and the Terms of Reference for fact-finding missions by Special Rapporteurs and Representatives¹⁶.

¹⁶ The terms of reference for country visits were adopted at the fourth annual meeting (1997) of

Country visits allow mandate-holders to assess the general human rights situation and/or the specific institutional, legal, judicial and administrative situation in a given State, under their respective mandates. During these visits, they meet national authorities, representatives of civil society, victims of human rights violations, the United Nations country team, academics, the diplomatic community and the media. On the basis of their findings, they make recommendations in public reports. These reports are submitted to the Human Rights Council.

Some mandate-holders also hold press conferences and issue preliminary findings at the end of a country visit. The success of country visits is greatly enhanced by the commitment of the Government and the participation of civil society actors, before, during and after the visit, to support the work of the mandate-holder

**TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR FACT-FINDING MISSIONS BY
SPECIAL RAPPORTEURS/REPRESENTATIVES OF
THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS**

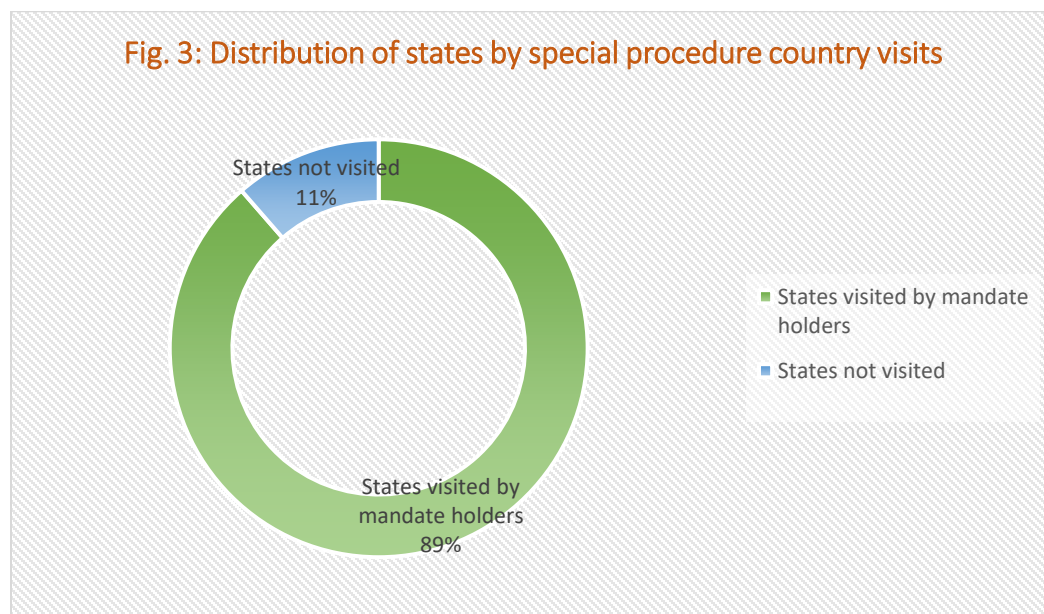
During fact-finding missions, special rapporteurs or representatives of the Commission on Human Rights, as well as United Nations staff accompanying them, should be given the following guarantees and facilities by the Government that invited them to visit its country:

- a) Freedom of movement in the whole country, including facilitation of transport, in particular to restricted areas;
- b) Freedom of inquiry, in particular as regards:
 - i. Access to all prisons, detention centres and places of interrogation;
 - ii. Contacts with central and local authorities of all branches of government;
 - iii. Contacts with representatives of non-governmental organizations, other private institutions and the media;
 - iv. Confidential and unsupervised contact with witnesses and other private persons, including persons deprived of their liberty, considered necessary to fulfil the mandate of the special rapporteur; and,
 - v. Full access to all documentary material relevant to the mandate;
- c) Assurance by the Government that no persons, official or private individuals who have been in contact with the special rapporteur/representative in relation to the mandate will for this reason suffer threats, harassment or punishment or be subjected to judicial proceedings;
- d) Appropriate security arrangements without, however, restricting the freedom of movement and inquiry referred to above;
- e) Extension of the same guarantees and facilities mentioned above to the appropriate United Nations staff who will assist the special rapporteur/representative before, during and after the visit.

As of 31 December 2019, the large majority of Member States, namely 171, had received at least one visit from a mandate holder (See Fig. 03). However, 22 Member States had not yet been visited by any mandate holder, of which 6 had not yet received a request for a visit, 13 had not yet accepted a request,

special procedures (E/CN.4/1998/45) and are intended to guide Governments in the conduct of country visits.

1 had extended an invitation and 2 had accepted visits that had not yet taken place. ¹⁷ [CLICK HERE](#) to access detailed information on the status of all country visits requested by mandate holders and forthcoming visits.



Special Procedure Country Visits to Pakistan

Since 1998, three Country Visits of Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council to Pakistan have been successfully completed. Pakistan has currently issued no standing invitation to the special procedure mandates.

NAME OF THE SPECIAL PROCEDURE MECHANISM	DURATION OF VISIT TO PAKISTAN
Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences ¹⁸	09-11 September 1999
Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges & Lawyers	19 – 29 May 2012
Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances ¹⁹	10 – 20 September 2012

¹⁷ A/HRC/43/64/Add.1, chap. VII

¹⁸ See Addendum of the Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Ms. Radhika Coomaraswamy, submitted to the Commission on Human Rights (13 March 2000)

¹⁹ See A/HRC/22/45/Add.2 ; Report of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances on its mission to Pakistan (10 – 20 September 2012)

1.1.3. Expert Consultations

Special procedures mandate holders frequently organise seminars or consultations on topics related to their mandate. Such consultations may either have been requested by the Human Rights Council, or organised by mandate holders with the support of OHCHR in order to receive information for their studies or thematic reports from a broad range of States and experts.

[CLICK HERE](#) to explore recent and upcoming seminars, consultations and other events organised by special procedures mandate holders.

1.1.4. Other Activities

Either at the request of the Human Rights Council or at the initiative of the mandate-holders, special procedures **prepare thematic studies**²⁰, **develop human rights standards** and guidelines, participate in expert consultations, seminars and conferences, organize panels during the sessions of the Human Rights Council, organise “**working visits**”, i.e. in-country missions that are not fact-finding but a mix between technical assistance, mediation and the development of best practices, and **raise public awareness** about specific human rights situations and phenomena attesting threats to and violations of human rights through public statements and interaction with a wide variety of partners.

4.3. Reporting

Special procedures mandate-holders are requested by the Human Rights Council to present annual reports²¹ in which they describe the activities undertaken during the previous year. The annual reports discuss general issues concerning: working methods, theoretical analysis, general trends and developments with regard to their respective mandates and may contain general recommendations.

Reports on country visits are usually presented as addenda to the annual reports. Many special procedures mandates are also requested to present reports to the UN General Assembly.

What are the benefits of reading Annual Reports of the UN Special Procedures?

²⁰ *Thematic Reports and studies can be found on the webpage of the respective mandate holder. Visit: <https://spinternet.ohchr.org/ViewAllCountryMandates.aspx?Type=TM&lang=en>*

²¹ *The Annual Reports of the Special Procedures to the UN Human Rights Council are available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/SP/Pages/AnnualreportsHRC.aspx>*

Special procedures typically present an annual thematic reports to the Human Rights Council (including research, studies, guidelines etc). Many of the thematic special procedures also present annual thematic reports to the General Assembly. Through these thematic reports special procedures mandate holders identify root causes, patterns and complexities relating to particular human rights violations, highlight good practices around the world, and issue recommendations. These recommendations outline measures to be adopted to overcome particular obstacles and to strengthen political, institutional, legal, judicial and administrative frameworks to ensure the promotion and protection of a particular right. The findings and recommendations of special procedures' reports represent important resources and reference materials for human rights planning and programming for both state and civil society. They provide legal, policy and operational guidance on human rights issues for development and humanitarian actors and provide clarification on the applicable legal framework.

5. COORDINATION AMONGST THE SPECIAL PROCEDURES

5.1. Annual Meetings of Special Procedures

Annual meetings²² of special procedures mandate-holders have been organized since 1994. These meetings provide an opportunity for mandate holders to meet and exchange views with States, the Bureau of the Council, civil society/non-governmental organizations

²² For more information, visit: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/SP/AMeeting/Pages/AnnualMeeting.aspx>

(NGOs), national human rights institutions (NHRIs), and representatives from OHCHR and other United Nations entities on issues such as follow-up to their country visits and recommendations. Participants have, whenever possible, previously also held joint meetings with Chairs of the human rights treaty bodies in Geneva during the same period.

The Annual Meeting of special procedures, which has been organized since 1994 and is usually held in June, offers mandate holders the opportunity to discuss issues of common interest, coordinate their work and meet with a range of stakeholders, including States and civil society organizations. Information on each Annual Meeting and instructions on how to submit information or points for consideration by mandate holders can be found under the relevant meeting listed below:

26th Annual Meeting	17 to 21 June 2019
25th Annual Meeting	04 to 08 June 2018
24th Annual Meeting	27 to 30 June 2017
23rd Annual Meeting	06 to 10 June 2016
22nd Annual Meeting	08 to 12 June 2015
21st Annual Meeting	29 Sep to 03 Oct 2014
20th Annual Meeting	24 to 28 June 2013
19th Annual Meeting	11 to 15 June 2012
18th Annual Meeting	27 June to 01 July 2011
17th Annual Meeting	28 June to 02 July 2010
16th Annual Meeting	29 June to 03 July 2009
15th Annual Meeting	23 to 27 June 2008
14th Annual Meeting	18 to 22 June 2007
13th Annual Meeting	19 to 23 June 2006
12th Annual Meeting	21- 25 of June 2005
11th Annual Meeting	21- 25 of June 2004
10th Annual Meeting	23 - 27 June 2003

5.2. Coordination Committee (CC) of Special Procedures

At their 12th Annual Meeting in 2005, Special Procedures mandate-holders established a Coordination Committee to facilitate coordination amongst mandate-holders and act as a bridge between them and other stakeholders. The CC equally seeks to promote the standing of the special procedures system.

The Coordination Committee (CC) is comprised of six Special Procedures mandate holders. The mandate of the CC has evolved since its creation, especially in respect to developments at the Human Rights Council and increasing dialogue and cooperation between mandate holders. The CC is, among others, tasked with:

- Enhancing the effectiveness and independence of mandate holders and facilitating their work;
- Raising the concerns of mandate holders in discussions of the Human Rights Council, in particular ensuring that the concerns of the Special Procedures system

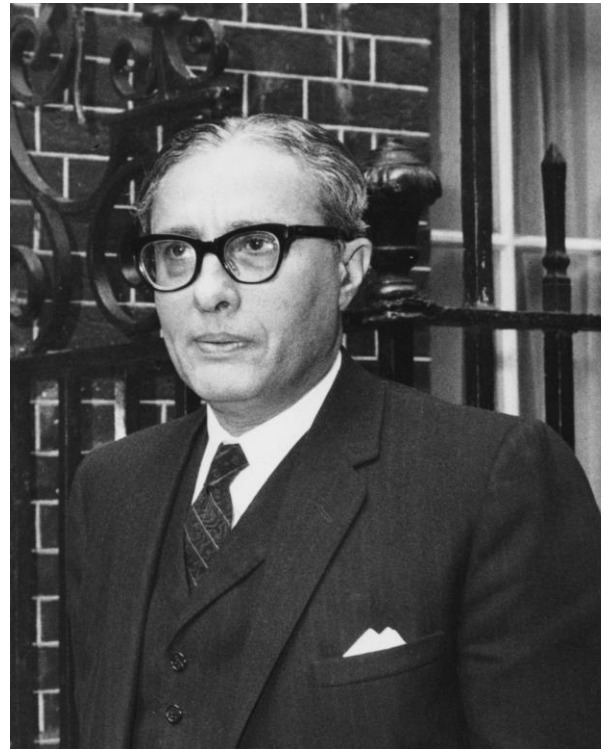
are taken into account, and reporting on the developments and progress in this regard;

- Proactively identifying issues of concern to groups of mandates and facilitating joint action on cross-cutting issues or issues of shared concern;
- Exchanging information and keeping mandate holders informed of the activities carried out by colleagues;
- Facilitating the sharing of experience concerning methods of work among mandate holders;
- Identifying innovative ways to raise awareness about special procedures and their work;
- Encouraging States to cooperate with Special Procedures;
- Proposing a draft agenda for the Annual Meeting of the Special Procedures and presenting a report on its activities to the Meeting.²³

6. SPECIAL PROCEDURES MANDATE-HOLDERS FROM PAKISTAN

Agha Hilaly

- Member of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances
(1981 - 2000)



²³ For more information regarding the Coordination Committee, please visit:
<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/SP/CoordinationCommittee/Pages/CCSpecialProceduresIndex.aspx>

Asma Jahangir

- Special Rapporteur of the UN Commission on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions (1998 - 2004)
- Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief (2004 - 2010)
- Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran (2016 - 2018)



Hina Jilani

- Special Representative of the Secretary General on the situation of human rights defenders (2000 - 2008)



Shaheen Sardar Ali

- Vice-Chair of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention

(2008 – 2014)



Farida Shaheed

- Special Rapporteur in the field of Cultural Rights

(2009 – 2015) ²⁴



²⁴ In 2012 the mandate was changed from Independent Expert to Special Rapporteur (HRC res. 19/6).

Faiza Patel

- Member of the Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination

(2010 – 2014)



Javid Rehman

- Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran

(Incumbent – Assumed Office in 2018)

