



Wilton Park



Report

## Human Rights 2020

Wednesday 15 – Friday 17 January 2020 | WP1725

In association with:



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA



Ministry for Foreign  
Affairs of Finland



## Report

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### Summary

Peacebuilding is now commonly understood as a continuum of action, ranging broadly from preventing the occurrence of conflict, through mediation and conflict resolution, to support for post-conflict activities. As such, efforts to sustain peace are necessary not only once conflict has broken out but also long beforehand, preventing conflict by addressing its root causes. While the UN Security Council (UNSC) has primary responsibility for authorising action for the maintenance of peace and security, peacebuilding is recognised as a system-wide responsibility of the United Nations (UN), requiring synergies between the three pillars of the organisation, peace and security, human rights and development. It also calls for cooperation between the principal organs and bodies of the UN. Yet there is concern that effective work between actors across the three UN pillars requires strengthening so as to overcome the traditional tendency to act in thematic silos. The UN Secretary-General (SG) has spoken of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the treaties derived from it, as a key prevention tool: the rights set out identify where many of the root causes of conflict arise, while the fulfilment of these rights provides concrete solutions. The UN's human rights framework, together with its principal intergovernmental body, the Human Rights Council (HRC), should therefore be involved throughout the peacebuilding continuum, including action to prevent conflict. In recent decades, there have been clear advances in incorporating human rights into peace and security discussions and activities, thereby helping bridge a perceived gap between UN institutions in New York and the HRC in Geneva. In the current geo-political climate in multilateralism, it may seem difficult to advance this progress. Yet efforts to do so should continue. Framing the human rights message appropriately is important. The ongoing UN reform process, especially the Peacebuilding Architecture (PBA) Review, provides an opportunity for underlining the key role of human rights.

## Key points arising during the discussion include

- There is a need to be systematic and strategic in identifying openings or entry points for human rights in the context of conflict prevention in the on-going reform process at UN headquarters, in regular reporting to the UNSC and in building flexible cross-regional alliances, including on a case-by-case basis.
- More work has to be done on presenting the evidence which demonstrates the value of human rights to peace and security policy and practice, showing there will be better security outcomes and safer societies as well as social good, such as improved justice.
- It is at the local level where peacebuilding and human rights communities cross divides and work together effectively, and such local civil society organisations should be listened to. Much work is being conducted which is not specifically 'labelled' human rights, or sustaining peace, but is directed towards the same aims.
- Exclusion is a major source of grievance in today's world and often a root cause of conflict. Conversely an inclusive approach to building and sustaining peace is more likely to be successful.
- There is a need to re-think the use of language in the human rights community so as to maximise impact and to engage other communities. Too much jargon is used, and language needs to be appropriate for the community it is aimed to reach. Tone is also important in building alliances: preaching is often not persuasive.
- Despite the difficult geo-political climate for multilateralism and human rights, it is necessary for governments, international organisations and the broader human rights community to be assertive in standing up for human rights values and speaking out against systematic violations wherever they occur.

## Background

Since the beginning of his term of office in 2017, the UN SG has sought to improve delivery of the organisation's mandate, leading to a restructuring of the peace and security pillar. The overarching goals are to prioritise prevention and sustaining peace, moving towards a single, integrated peace and security pillar, aligned more closely with the development and human rights pillars. Against this background, the Wilton Park conference brought together expertise from conflict-affected countries, policy makers in donor governments, the UN and other international organisations, human rights defenders and advocates, as well as other field practitioners with the principal aims of:

- identifying practical ways in which to integrate human rights discourse into conflict prevention and mediation;
- enhancing understanding of how human rights frameworks can contribute to sustainable peace;
- integrating field knowledge and local human rights expertise into political decision-making;
- and strengthening links among key agencies and actors, particularly across a spectrum of policymakers, civil society and frontline practitioners.

## Examining the context and the challenges

1. The past 30 years has seen major expansion in the UN's peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities and considerable progress in the inclusion of human rights promotion and protection in the field missions undertaking this work. This is felt to be amply demonstrated, for instance, by the current peacekeeping mission in the

Democratic Republic of Congo. MONUSCO<sup>1</sup> has been authorised to use all necessary means to carry out its mandate relating, inter alia, to the protection of civilians, humanitarian personnel and human rights defenders under imminent threat of physical violence.

2. Yet it is suggested that the multilateral world is entering a geopolitical period as difficult as the Cold War; advances made to-date in implementing human rights, and integrating them in the UN's broader activities, are under serious threat. There is a clear pushback against human rights. Influential and vocal governments perceive a loss of national authority, and argue in UN fora that there is a 'new colonialism' in the advocacy for human rights, which is disguising regime change and imposing alien values. More broadly, governments are framing issues simplistically from a conflict perspective, speaking of exceptional situations which require the curtailment of human rights. Many states deliberately conflate security, terrorism and migration, which demonises and dehumanises the individuals concerned. Ironically, it likely impedes their ability to counter terrorism effectively.
3. With the rise of populism in parts of Europe, the US and elsewhere, there is also diminished resolve or political will among other governments, which have previously stood up for human rights, to counter such arguments. Western states are seen to be hypocritical, failing to criticise countries considered allies or commercial partners when human rights violations occur. Instability is rife in some parts of the world such as Syria, Yemen and Libya, resulting in egregious violations of human rights. Reprisals against human rights defenders have worsened. The international community has a wealth of information and the tool-kit to intervene, such as preventive diplomacy, early warning, horizon scanning and special sessions of the HRC; but early action is missing.
4. It is argued that there is an aspiration, and intent, to take preventative action and tackle root causes, and there are some positive examples, including by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Guinea Bissau and Madagascar. So why could the UNSC not take early action in countries such as Syria and Yemen? There has been much discussion about how the UNSC could work preventatively. Some question whether, over the years, it has become trapped in a sanctions mentality, imposing penalties only after the act? Often there is a correlation between the international profile or status of a country under consideration and the willingness of the UNSC, especially the five permanent members (P5), to take action, based on their strategic interest. To act preventatively would require confidence among not only P5 members, as well as the full UNSC membership, but with the country in question also, which would need to be persuaded the UNSC had its best interests at heart. Governments do not want to acknowledge there is potential instability in their country, even when a serious situation has developed. For some it is an open question as to whether the UNSC will ever be able to overcome this impasse. Within the UN Secretariat a Standing Principals' Group has been established by SG, which is chaired by him, bringing together Under-Secretaries-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and for Peace Operations inter alia to better focus on prevention. Regional Review Meetings<sup>2</sup>, now held monthly, of officials at UN headquarters, with remote participation of Resident Coordinators of the countries under review, can consider human rights information and analysis, taking the pulse of emerging conflicts and referring such information to more senior levels. Yet there is still a distinction between the availability of information and the ability to act. In these circumstances, smaller countries are left to step into the breach, such as the

<sup>1</sup> United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo. See UN Security Council Resolution 1925 of 28 May 2019 for the mandate of the mission.

<sup>2</sup> Regional Quarterly Review Meetings were originally established as part of the Plan of Action to implement the Human Rights Up Front initiative, to consider early warning information and agree on possible preventive and responsive measures to address the evolving situations.

Netherlands, using its Presidency of the UNSC to garner action to improve humanitarian aid in Yemen and Gambia, bringing a case at the International Court of Justice under the Genocide Convention on the Rohingya crisis. While such action can make a difference, it is not enough.

## How to respond?

### Learning from the field

5. Work at the UN is ongoing to improve the process of mandating peacekeeping and peace support operations, to make them more realistic and achievable, in response to criticism that mandates were based on templates, detached from conditions on the ground, and leaving peacekeepers fire-fighting. Protection of civilians now features as a priority in 10 of the 13 mandates for peacekeeping operations. At the same time, field operations have developed a flexibility and adaptability to seize opportunities, including embedding human rights in their activity. It is felt there is a gradual narrowing of the gap between peace and security and human rights, and human rights have entered into the military lexicon and practice. Rules of Engagement (RoE) and Standard Operating Procedures (SoP) broadly reflect a collective responsibility to protect human rights. Commanders are generally familiar with human rights concepts even if there may be continuing problems with ensuring all UN forces are similarly informed. It has to be remembered that troops contributed to UN operations may come from countries where human rights violations regularly occur.
6. The Human Rights Due Diligence Policy, adopted in 2011, which requires all UN entities to be diligent in ensuring that support to non-UN security forces is in compliance with and promotes respect for human rights and international humanitarian law, has been critical in fixing human rights to mission policy and practice. It offers much scope to ensure responsibility for human rights has greater ownership in all mission components and procedures are in place to tackle impunity. As an example of a further and ambitious development, in the UN's Mali mission<sup>3</sup>, call centres have been established in the country's six provinces to enable the public to report directly human rights violations.
7. Integrating human rights into field operations means there is 'real time' information available to the senior leadership of the mission, and it is no longer possible to justify failure to protect civilians through not knowing human rights violations are taking place. As such, the effectiveness and utility of human rights reporting is dependent on the mission leadership, both civilian and military. While it is felt there has been considerable progress in field missions in using shared databases between military and civilian components, including logging the names of perpetrators, how the information is used is key. Some are concerned there may still be instances when human rights reporting is diluted when filtered through the mission leadership. That said, human rights officers, coupled with UN uniformed forces, can play an important role in developing the capacity of local police forces, or when undertaking investigations into inter-communal violence. Increasing the number of women uniformed personnel has important benefits for effective operations, including outreach to marginalised communities. In the field context, the human rights familiarity and experience of the Resident Coordinator (RC) is important: much depends on the role of the RC as to whether information and guidance on human rights is implemented or not.
8. There is, inevitably, much more that can be done to improve the integration of human rights in field operations although there is a lot of activity in the field which may not be strictly labelled 'human rights' but may still achieve the same aim. While civil society

<sup>3</sup> The United National Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) originally established in 2013

organisations may be heard, it is suggested their voice is not necessarily listened to. This is particularly felt to be the case in relation to policy discussions in UN Headquarters. While Arria Formula<sup>4</sup> meetings continue to be held, it is felt these could be used more frequently to hear lived experiences from civil society in the field. Other bodies, including importantly the Peacebuilding Commission, should follow similar practice. Governments should be supportive of bringing such testimonies into policy-making circles, and defend the practice against its critics. To ensure the safety of those providing testimony, the UN Secretariat should develop a policy to prevent and address intimidation and reprisals against civil society representatives engaging with UN bodies. Difficulty in obtaining visas is a further deterrent and a facilitated procedure is needed.

## **Building on what works**

9. There is much literature analysing peace processes, and a good deal of evidence of what works. Many peace processes have involved political elites, mostly men, and can leave out the great majority of people. Yet it is at the local level that peace takes shape: through sharing space, everyday civility and getting on with daily life. People need to see themselves reflected in a peace process, through engaging the community, not just the parties. A significant factor in reaching an outcome is inclusion; hence the importance of integrating human rights from the outset. The more actors who become stakeholders, the less chance there will be of attempts to undermine the process. Peace processes may have landmark events, like signing a peace accord, but sustaining peace remains an on-going process.
10. The long and complex peace process in Colombia provides an interesting example, particularly with regard to adopting a human rights approach. The objective was not just to end 50 years of conflict but to build a positive human rights future, which required looking further ahead to what would prevent future violations. There were five major agenda items:
  - rural development, providing education, livelihoods and incorporating the sustainable development goals, aiming not just to achieve equality but also security;
  - civil society participation, to ensure that policies were not designed only in the urban centres but through holding consultations with a cross-section of the poorest and most vulnerable or victimised people
  - demobilising, disarmament and reintegration (DDR), involving the military in crafting these aspects of the process;
  - tackling drug trafficking, and the violence it fuelled, through providing socio-economic support for crop substitution;
  - a victim-centred approach to transitional justice, providing for prosecution and sanctioning, but through restriction of civil liberties for several years rather than imprisonment.
11. A very time consuming but practical and pragmatic component was to undertake a cadastral survey, examining land titles to dismantle the previous monopolies and allocate land to local responsibility or public service. The consultations and survey helped build local ownership of the peace process, and embed the overall peace process road map in local plans. There is a single locus for handling the peace process, the Presidency, to which the agency responsible for implementation of the road map reports.

<sup>4</sup> Arria Formula meetings are informal UNSC gatherings within a flexible procedural framework enabling an exchange with specifically invited persons whom the organising UNSC member considers it beneficial for the body to hear

12. Some ask whether the peace process in Colombia takes account of human rights, or human rights inform the actual design of the process, or conceivably both. Important elements for a peace process with a human rights approach are for the mediating team to be informed of human rights, to establish confidence building measures to redress serious violations, to lock into agreements long-term commitments, provide for human rights monitoring as part of the agreements, and continue capacity building in human rights to accompany the long-term trajectory of the country. It has to be recognised that in a mediation process it is often easier to agree a forward-looking perspective on strengthening human rights than how to deal with the thorny issue of past crimes. As such, there is a need to be creative about policy options, and what might work in a particular context, although impunity is unacceptable in any situation. Provisions in Colombia on transitional justice may not be easily applicable elsewhere, and had created considerable frustration for victims, particularly in the length of time it took to establish the tribunal mechanism. Transitional justice provisions in South Africa, where a Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established, may provide a more helpful example. The failure of the Northern Ireland peace process not to come up with viable transitional justice provisions, it is suggested, has continuing deleterious effect.
13. Human rights defenders, especially women, can play a key role in peacebuilding, from providing early warning at the outbreak of conflict, assisting in the delivery of humanitarian aid, promoting an inclusive peace process and addressing impunity<sup>5</sup>. There is no shortage of activist women defending their communities, although many would not categorise themselves as human rights defenders. Such women need particular support in establishing a protection network to counter the risks they take in this activity.
14. Exclusion is often a root cause of grievance and early indicator of conflict, as exemplified by protests currently taking place in many parts of the world. There is a need to give renewed attention to discrimination, and realising economic and social rights as well as popular and meaningful participation in governance structures. The human rights lens needs to be used to desegregate politics and exclusion. Sustaining peace requires institutional mechanisms to build a common vision of society, and end the dichotomy between the centre and rural areas.
15. Much current protest in different parts of the world is non-violent, and attention needs to be given at the UN and regional levels, both in normative terms and training, to ensuring this does not become violent.

### **Engaging broader communities in conflict settings**

16. Because peace and security, development and human rights communities have traditionally worked in silos, they also speak in different languages. Human rights will not easily be integrated in other areas of work without avoiding jargon and technical language and speaking more simply so as to be able to engage with a broad range of actors. The language of human rights can also seem very distant when talking to people whose lives have been shattered by conflict. Having been subject to systematic abuses undermines a sense of community and instils distrust. There is similarly a need for greater awareness when framing issues, and the implications (see para 2 above).
17. Human rights actors need to build coalitions, going beyond the usual suspects and bringing different voices into play. There is a need to identify what would encourage the private sector and business to work with human rights actors in conflict settings. How can you impress upon social media its role and responsibility? Leaders in the

<sup>5</sup> See November 2019 report by the International Service for Human Rights (ISHR) entitled Are peace and security possible without women human rights defenders  
[https://www.ishr.ch/sites/default/files/documents/ishr\\_whrd\\_report\\_2019\\_web\\_2.pdf](https://www.ishr.ch/sites/default/files/documents/ishr_whrd_report_2019_web_2.pdf)

faith community, whose authority is respected, can be an important channel through which to transmit messages. At the same time, new relationships should be entered into with eyes open and without compromising on important principles. Messaging by stealth would doubtless lead to sham support, and there is often a need to call a spade a spade. The role of peers is important, for example military speaking to military has a better chance of changing mindsets.

18. Youth is a vital sector to reach, and a youth-centred approach requires investment in schools, education and human rights education. Recognition of the positive contribution of youth to conflict resolution and peace processes is documented in the progress study of youth, peace and security<sup>6</sup>.
19. Helping to build constituencies to claim their own rights is also key. As with women community leaders, it allows different actors to innovate. There is no single approach to injecting human rights in peacebuilding but strength in different approaches and strategies. Knowledge is power, and finding the right pedagogy in training different actors, whether military, police or others, is important.
20. Additional to engaging new communities, working with local civil society organisations remains crucial: this is where the human rights and peacebuilding communities cross divides and work together. The international community should listen to these local partners, and support local capacity consistently, not only when things go wrong. There should be local needs assessments with meaningful local participation. While support to such organisations is often directed towards training on how to document violations, it could perhaps more appropriately be used to help identify funding sources, and what measures they can take to protect themselves in their work. It is also suggested training for civil society organisations on how the military works may be useful.

### **Harnessing new technology**

21. The human rights community is only at the beginning of understanding how new technology can be used as a positive influence, and there needs to be devoted resources to develop better knowledge of this. New technology clearly assists in gathering data about violations, and is an important tool for publicity so that it is no longer possible for governments or others to claim they were unaware of what is happening. It is a force for mobilising people to a common cause. But with data collection there are risks, of reliability and of reprisals for those involved in such work. There can be misuse, or even unintentional misuse, of information and data. Fear of false or partial information may make for hesitancy in action. Hate speech spreads on the internet exponentially.
22. There is a need for the human rights community to refine what new technologies mean in practice, for example mapping the implications of artificial intelligence. While algorithms can be used for early warning to identify trends, could they also be used to challenge antithetical views to human rights, and push the value of human rights? Information can be usefully micro-targeted. It is also important to involve the business community and appeal to or impress upon business its social responsibility to contribute to the greater good.

<sup>6</sup> See The Missing Peace: Independent Study on Youth, Peace and Security, published in 2018  
<https://www.youth4peace.info/ProgressStudy>



## Securing resources

23. While human rights is one of the three pillars of UN activity, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) continues to receive limited resources from the regular UN budget to undertake this work<sup>7</sup>, which does not keep pace with the growth in scope and number of official human rights mandates. OHCHR has thus for decades been highly dependent on voluntary contributions to its budget. This entails political risk as well as major planning uncertainties for OHCHR. In this context, a regular and constructive exchange between OHCHR and the Fifth Committee<sup>8</sup> of the UNGA is of great importance.
24. The funding situation for civil society organisations is similarly precarious. It is difficult for new organisations to break into funding streams, and for civil society groups based in conflict-affected countries there are often constraints on receiving funding from abroad, or the very act of registering as an organisation constitutes a risk. It is particularly difficult to find funding for preventative work, where the outcome, the non-emergence of conflict, is perhaps insufficiently tangible for government donors to demonstrate value for money to their tax-payers. One idea to meet these needs is to create a fund, outside a UN framework and with public or private donations, for sustainable peace start-ups – Peace Innovation Partnerships specifically to unite peace and security initiatives with human rights at a local or regional level.
25. There is a need better to identify where funding decisions are made, and to encourage risk-taking, for example to fund local initiatives even if there are no immediate or short-term outcomes. Some suggest trying to obtain Overseas Development Assistance to mobilise resources for implementing human rights commitments and build human rights resilience and capacity. Support for national human rights infrastructure, as well as instilling a human rights culture in national institutions like the police, is key. National human rights institutions (NHRIs), often created as part of a peace process, are not just an outcome of an agreement but have a major role to play in consolidating the peace. Planning needs to be long-term and comprehensive. It is not viable to undertake security sector reform without financial resources and alternative means of livelihood. Funding thus needs to be sustained long-term.
26. There are a number of UN funds which might perhaps be used for funding initiatives aiming to integrate human rights in peace and security. The Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) has recently received an increase in funding – though clearly it covers a large scope of activity. It aims to include prevention initiatives, and funds both UN and civil society interventions. It is suggested there may be scope for joint approaches. It may also be feasible to link peace and security and human rights in applications to the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women.

## General recommendations

27. A strong vision is needed to raise the priority of human rights again. This will require continuing investment in human rights education and building support from public opinion.
28. The human rights community needs to review the language and messaging with which it engages with other communities, to simplify and enable outreach to a broader range of actors and partners, in language appropriate to them.

<sup>7</sup> The approved regular budget appropriation for OHCHR in 2018-2019 was just 3.7 per cent of the total UN regular budget.

<sup>8</sup> The Fifth Committee of the General Assembly is responsible for administrative and budgetary matters.

## **Preventing and managing conflict**

29. The human rights movement should continue to engage with authoritarian governments and debunk myths about human rights, attempting to persuade and providing evidence to demonstrate the value of human rights. For example, it would be useful to give illustrations of how the denial of human rights may lead to terrorism, and provoke other instability and conflict.
30. There is a need to build a business case to demonstrate the value of human rights in conflict prevention, along the lines of the joint UN-World Bank Study on Pathways to Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict, and apply human rights to peace and security policies and practice.
31. Share, promote and learn from examples where conflict prevention has worked.
32. Conflict is a changing environment and regularly transmutes. In such circumstances, there is a need to be nimble and look not only to mediated peace processes but creative policy options in space which opens up.

## **Securing and sustaining peace**

33. Sustaining peace is a long-term process, requiring long-term planning and funding. Long-term commitments should be entrenched in peace agreements, and long-term funding can be tied to implementation of peace agreements. A durable investment in national capacity is required, instilling a culture of peace and human rights in national institutions.
34. Incentivising better, especially in funding, for collaborative, cross-pillar and inter-sectoral approaches would be helpful.
35. High profile political work in securing and sustaining peace should not detract from other important areas, like improving health systems. Among other health issues, there should be investment in trauma healing and psycho-social support, and the World Health Organisation (WHO) should play a role in this. Other actors, such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the World Bank Group are also relevant to effective work in sustaining peace and are increasingly involved.
36. Inclusion is key to a sustainable peace, and people must see themselves reflected in a peace process. Attention should be given to the inclusion of women and youth, and minority representation. Even when there is nothing happening at the top table and there are state-centric constraints, other sectors have to work together.
37. Local peacebuilding organisations, which bridge the peace and security and human rights divide, are consistent actors in the peace continuum and should be listened to. There is a need to contextualise and gain a deeper understanding of what has happened and better investment in civil society organisations at strategic and grassroots levels would help in this.

## **Recommendations to governments**

38. Governments should develop a more ambitious and long-term human rights strategy. This should include building cross-regional support for promoting human rights, multilateralism and the rule of law. Governments, individually and collectively, should invest in this agenda and be prepared to pay short-term political and economic costs for longer-term gains.
39. Governments should show leadership and speak out publicly in support of action to combat widespread and systematic human rights violations wherever they occur. They should also encourage the UNSG and the High Commissioner for Human Rights similarly to speak out about such situations.
40. Governments should ensure national policy coherence with regards to human rights and foreign policy, so that one part of government does not compromise the

government commitment to human rights.

41. Governments should promote greater access, and meaningful participation, for civil society representatives to UN organs, bodies and mechanisms. This should enable the UNSC or SRSGs to hear the lived experience of persons in conflict-affected societies. Governments should additionally facilitate the issuance of visas to enable participation at such UN bodies.
42. Governments contributing armed forces or police personnel to peace support operations are urged to increase the number of women they are prepared to deploy.
43. Governments should encourage and support the development of practical tools to strengthen the linkage between human rights and peace and security, such as the Canadian Government's Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations<sup>9</sup>, to help overcome barriers to increasing women's meaningful participation in peace operations, and the Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers, a set of political commitments focused on child protection in peacekeeping, at all stages of a conflict, applicable to armed forces and armed groups<sup>10</sup>.
44. Governments should use the HRC's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) as a tool for linking human rights to peace and security, formulating UPR recommendations with clear references to peacebuilding and assuring an adequate follow-up to these recommendations.
45. Governments should encourage improved communication between the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and HRC, designating reciprocal focal points and periodic attendance at appropriate meetings.
46. Governments should use the UN's PBA Review in 2020 to ensure that human rights are adequately reflected in a reformed PBA.
47. Governments should use the opportunity of the 7th biennial review of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy by the General Assembly in 2020 to put the case that respect for human rights contributes to security, whereas curtailment of rights can lead to terrorism.
48. Climate change has clear implications for peace and security and human rights, with loss of land, imposition of states of emergency and curtailment of rights, yet consideration of these issues is absent from the Conference of the Parties (COP) discussions under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Governments should promote access for civil society human rights and other representatives to the COP, and governments could include civil society representation in their delegations.

### **Recommendations relating to the UN**

49. The SG should, with support from member states, ensure that human rights are made central to his reform agenda, to prioritise prevention, including during the 2020 Review of the PBA. The Human Rights Up Front initiative, which seeks to strengthen the preventive work of the UN and recognize the value of early warning signals of crises to come, should be re-invigorated, resourced and effectively implemented by the organisation.
50. The UNSG should develop, with support from member states, an organisation-wide policy on promoting, protecting and ensuring the participation of human rights defenders at the international, regional and national levels, addressing intimidation

<sup>9</sup> See [https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues\\_development-enjeux\\_developpement/gender\\_equality-egalite\\_des\\_genres/elsie\\_initiative-initiative\\_elsie.aspx?lang=eng](https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/gender_equality-egalite_des_genres/elsie_initiative-initiative_elsie.aspx?lang=eng)

<sup>10</sup> See [https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues\\_development-enjeux\\_developpement/human\\_rights-droits\\_homme/principles-vancouver-principes.aspx?lang=eng](https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/human_rights-droits_homme/principles-vancouver-principes.aspx?lang=eng)

and reprisals against civil society. Protecting civil society space should be a priority not only for OHCHR, but should also be central to the mandates of all UN agencies involved in peace and sustainable development given the vital role of civil society in achieving these objectives.

51. Human rights reports and questions should regularly be brought to the UNSC, both by governments and, where possible, by the Secretariat.
52. The UNSG should ensure that human rights are integrated into the mandate and terms of reference of all SRSGs. In addition, the performance evaluation of senior UN leadership should include criteria to illustrate their record in incorporating human rights into their work. Bringing human rights into the mainstream of work should also be introduced as an indicator in human resource policies and advancement.
53. UN mechanisms dealing with human rights and conflict situations, such as the Special Representative of the SG for Children in Armed Conflict, the Special Representative of the SG on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, together with the mechanisms of the Human Rights Council, could better coordinate their work to become more strategic in their action.
54. Integrating human rights into a mission's objectives should be taken up at the earliest stage when drafting a mandate for a new peace support operation.
55. Systematic human rights and gender training should be given in all peace support operations.

## **Conclusion**

The adoption of 'twin' resolutions on sustaining peace in 2016 at the General Assembly and UNSC, recognising that development, peace and security, and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing, provide an open invitation to place human rights in the centre of the organisation's discussions on peace and security. The ongoing reform process at the UN, prioritising prevention and sustaining peace, offers continuing opportunities and requires sustained and assertive engagement by the human rights community in these policy discussions. In the current geo-political climate it may be difficult to advance, although the right human rights framing of issues will help. Embedding human rights in field missions has considerably evolved, together with the current OHCHR field presence in over 80 countries. The role of the mission leadership is invariably key in this. It remains at the local level where peacebuilding and human rights communities often work closely in common cause. ...

### **Isobelle Jaques**

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