

**Enhanced interactive dialogue with the High Commissioner on the
implementation of recommendations
of the fact-finding mission on Myanmar
14 September
Statement by Denmark on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries**

Madam President

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Nordic and Baltic countries – Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden, and my own country Denmark.

We continue to be deeply concerned by the findings of the FFM and call on Myanmar to fully implement all its recommendations and to pursue accountability through credible independent national and international criminal justice mechanisms.

We urge Myanmar to fully comply with the ICJ provisional measures. We reiterate the need for full implementation of the Rakhine Advisory Commission's recommendations.

Myanmar is undergoing a fragile democratic transition. We urge all political stakeholders in Myanmar to ensure inclusive, free, fair and credible elections, enabling the participation of the entire electorate without discrimination.

We remain concerned by the FFM's findings on the implications of hate speech and the role of private social media. We reiterate the need for consolidated solutions to online incitement to violence and hatred.

Madame High Commissioner, how can the Council best support inclusive elections in Myanmar?

Thank you

**Enhanced interactive dialogue on the oral update by the High
Commissioner on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic
14 September
Statement by Finland on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries**

Madame President/Mr Vice-President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of Denmark, Estonia, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden and my own country Finland.

We thank the High Commissioner and her Office for leadership in putting human rights at the heart of the global response.

It is important to remain vigilant on the impacts of the Covid-19 on those that are most at risk of becoming targets of marginalization, stigmatization, xenophobia and racism, and other forms of discrimination.

The risk of women and girls to face the ill-effects of the pandemic is high. For instance, women represent 70 percent of the health and social sector workforce globally, and too many women work under precarious conditions. We need to ensure women's and girls' full enjoyment of all human rights, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, and women's full and equal representation on short-term mitigation and long-term recovery measures.

Responding to the pandemic must not come at a price of weakening democracy, the respect of rule of law and human rights and of international commitments. Nor should the Covid-19 be used as a pretext to limit freedom of expression and of the media and access to information online/offline. On the contrary, a democratic, gender equal, human rights-based approach is a key to fight against Covid-19 and transparency and access to reliable information must be ensured.

A global pandemic needs a global response. Now is the time to protect and strengthen the multilateral system and the rules based international order – they need our political and financial support.

I thank you.

General Debate Item 2
15 September
Statement by Norway on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries

Madame President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Nordic and Baltic countries: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden and my own country, Norway.

We are deeply concerned about the current financial crisis of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the UN Office in Geneva, and the rest of the UN Secretariat. It is a liquidity crisis, resulting from delayed payment or non-payment by some UN Member States of their dues. For OHCHR, it is also an ongoing budget crisis, resulting from insufficient regular budget allocations. This forces the Office to rely every year on voluntary contributions for up to 20 pct. of its mandated activities. This double crisis is compounded by the COVID19 pandemic.

We urge all UN member states to pay their dues not only in full, but also in a timely manner. This is essential to enable the UN human rights system, and the wider UN system, to ensure the promotion, protection and fulfilment of all human rights, while leaving no one behind.

We stress that all mandated activities by the OHCHR should be fully funded from the regular UN budget. That requires adequate OHCHR budget proposals, as well as increased alignment between requests and resources coming from UN member states.

At a time when human rights are increasingly under pressure around the world, not least in the context of the COVID19 pandemic, we need as much as ever a strong human rights system, at the centre of a strong UN. We cannot afford otherwise.

I thank you.

**Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the human rights to
safe drinking water and sanitation
16 September
Statement by Denmark on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries**

Mdm. President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries.

We thank the Special Rapporteur for his report, which addresses key components to ensure the rights to water and sanitation.

Menstruation is a natural part of life for the 1.8 billion women, girls, transgender- and non-binary persons of reproductive age. Yet, millions across the world lack access to safe and private water and sanitation, thereby being unable to manage menstrual cycles in a dignified, healthy way. This particularly affects refugees, internally displaced, women with disabilities, detained, imprisoned or homeless.

Lack of access to water, sanitation, and menstrual products combined with stigma often leads to girls skipping school. It negatively affects women's participation in work, social events, religious ceremonies, and may affect their mental health. COVID-19 has amplified the importance of access to clean water and sanitation. During this crisis, we remain fully committed to SRHR, including access to water and sanitation for menstrual health. Also due to climate change, we all need to redouble efforts.

Mr Heller,

How do we best realize the rights to water and sanitation, including for menstrual health during the COVID-19 crisis?

Thank you.

**Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on
contemporary forms of slavery
16 September
Statement by Norway on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries**

Madame President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden and my own country Norway.

We would like to commend the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences, for his commitment and dedication to fulfilling his mandate.

With COVID 19 we are now faced with an extraordinary situation. Human Rights are under pressure. In order to reach the Sustainable Development Goals, we must make sure that we reach persons in the most marginalised and vulnerable situations, especially women and girls who make up seventy-one percent of victims of modern slavery. We would like to thank the Special Rapporteur for his latest report focusing on the Impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic on contemporary forms of slavery and slavery-like practices. The report is an important tool in understanding our common challenges in the wake of the pandemic.

Madame President,

The fight against modern slavery is part of the fight against extreme poverty. To be able to address modern slavery effectively, collaboration between stakeholders are essential. A key objective of the 2030 Agenda is to leave no one behind. We can only achieve this if Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms are respected and countries comply with their international obligations.

Special Rapporteur,

- You are calling for a common, global anti-slavery strategy. Could you please elaborate the potential effect of such an agreement?
- You are calling for more evidence-based and victim-centered research, data collection and analysis. How can States contribute to meet this need?

Thank you

**Interactive Dialogue with special rapporteur on truth, justice, reparation
and guarantees of non-recurrence
16 September
Statement by Estonia on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries**

Madam President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden and my own country Estonia.

Mr. Special Rapporteur,

We would like to thank you for your report and hard work in the field. We strongly concur with the view that past crimes – committed during an armed conflict or by a repressive regime – must be adequately addressed in order to build a democratic, pluralistic, inclusive and peaceful society. The human rights-based approach should always be prioritized and applied.

Memorialization as a key pillar of transitional justice plays an important role in peacebuilding. Memory processes and accountability should complement each other. Impunity leads to legitimization of violence and contributes to the possibility of recurrence. The acknowledgement of gross human rights violations is essential for restoring dignity of victims and therefore, the victims must play a key role in the construction of memory.

Memory processes should never result in the re-victimization of victims of human rights violations. Memorialization should be based on documentation and archives. In this context, we would stress the importance of promoting efforts to counter disinformation and fostering online media literacy as well as digital skills. As we know, disinformation and incitement to violence, hatred or discrimination contribute to the dissolution of societies and encourages violence.

Mr Rapporteur,

We would welcome you advice to governments on how to always ensure that the voices of victims of human rights violations are central in the construction of memory?

Thank you.

Urgent debate on Belarus
18 September
Statement by Denmark on behalf of the Nordic countries

Madame President,

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Nordic countries: Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and my own country Denmark.

We thank the High Commissioner and the Special Rapporteur for their independent assessments of the grave human rights situation in Belarus, and the other speakers for their testimonies.

The human rights situation in Belarus has been grim for decades. Intimidation and repression have systematically been used as tactics by the authorities. In recent months, the situation has deteriorated alarmingly. We therefore welcome this important and timely urgent debate on the human rights situation in Belarus.

The people of Belarus are asking for their human rights to be respected and for their voices to be heard. The presidential election in August was neither free nor fair. The population was deprived of the opportunity to decide over the future of their country.

The Nordic countries are deeply concerned about the failure of the Belarusian authorities to respect and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms. Not least freedom of peaceful assembly and association and freedom of opinion and expression, both online and offline.

We are alarmed by the credible allegations of widespread torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. We call for full accountability for those responsible. Furthermore, we call on the Belarusian authorities to immediately release all those unlawfully detained.

Finally, we welcome the start of an independent OSCE fact-finding mission, under the Moscow Mechanism, as a very important step.

Madame President,

We cannot stand by silently as we witness such appalling human rights violations. The Nordic countries therefore strongly support the adoption of the presented resolution today. We stand in solidarity with the Belarusian people in their fight for their rights and their future.

Thank you.

Interactive Dialogue with the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention
21 September
Statement by Lithuania on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries

Thank you President.

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Norway, Sweden and my own country Lithuania.

The prohibition of arbitrary deprivation of liberty is absolute and universal. Such deprivation can never be justified. We thank the Working Group for its continued efforts to prevent and end this practice.

We note with great concern the recent cases of arbitrary detention around the world, which are often associated with other severe human rights violations, such as torture and enforced disappearance. We regret the low response rates to the Working Groups' communications and call on all States to cooperate with the Working Group, including by responding positively to requests for country visits, urgent appeals and communications and by following up on its opinions and condemn the acts of reprisals against those who choose to do so.

The Nordic and Baltic countries fully share the recommendations by the WG on the urgent need to address the situation on female detainees, to ensure full enjoyment of the right to effective legal assistance and the need to address the issue of modern technologies in the context of deprivation of liberty.

To this end, how could the Working Group facilitate prompt and comprehensive implementation of these recommendations by the Member States?

**Interactive Dialogue with the Working Group on
Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances
21 September
Statement by Iceland on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries**

Madame President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Nordic and Baltic countries: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Iceland.

We thank the Working Group for the report on their activities and the focus of its thematic report on impunity.

We reiterate our view that enforced disappearance is a serious violation of human rights. It is a violation of the rights of the victim, and the uncertainty of loved ones can be equated to psychological torture, one that can be compounded by the impunity surrounding such disappearances.

We therefore concur with the conclusion of the Working Group that an effective investigation of enforced disappearances must include information about the whereabouts and the fates of the disappeared persons, if such exists, the circumstances of their disappearance and the identity of the perpetrators who must be brought to justice. in accordance with international human rights law.

We are grateful for the efforts of the Working Group to work to establish the truth around enforced disappearances and continue to urge States to respond favorably to requests by the Working Group to visit and to extend all necessary cooperation.

We would like to ask the Working Group what measures States can take to support the fight against impunity and enforced disappearances beyond their territory?

I thank you.

General debate Item 3
22 September
Statement by Estonia on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries

Madame President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Nordic and Baltic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Estonia.

As we are embarking on the decade of action and delivery for the sustainable development goals it is important to keep in mind the human rights-based approach. Human rights and sustainable development goals are inseparable and can only be implemented hand in hand. With the unprecedented challenge of Covid-19 pandemic, it is even more important to reach the most vulnerable among us and to leave no one behind.

Agenda 2030 can only be fulfilled with full respect to all human rights, including to women's and girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights. In this regard, we welcome the OHCHR report on maternal mortality and morbidity. Women and girls' right to sexual and bodily autonomy is at the core of their enjoyment of human rights, including the right to health. Lack of access to comprehensive sexuality education, sexual and reproductive health services, contraceptives and protection from sexual and gender based violence are considerable contributors to maternal morbidity that carry the potential of long-term negative impacts on women's health and quality of life. To prevent maternal morbidity States should work to ensure access to quality treatment and preventive services, and take measure to strengthen the accountability for human rights denials.

Finally, we would like to stress that all human rights are universal, interrelated, interdependent, and inherent to every human being. With the view to the SGs report on death penalty, we reiterate our strong opposition to the death penalty in all circumstances. While welcoming the trend towards the universal abolition of the death penalty, we call on all countries who have not yet done so, to immediately stop the executions, especially for the offences committed by minors, with the aim of progressively moving towards the abolition of death penalty.

Thank you.

**Interactive Dialogue with the Commission of Inquiry
on the Syrian Arab Republic
22 September
Statement by Sweden on behalf of the Nordic countries**

Mdm, President,

I am honoured to deliver this statement on behalf of the Nordic countries.

We thank the Commission of Inquiry. The devastating July report on Idlib still haunts us, not least the likely regime war crimes. Your new report, adds additional clarity on Idlib, but we also take note of your findings on Afrin and Ra's al-Ayn regions.

It also adds important insights into the situation in regime-controlled areas. In Daraa and Suwayda, we see evidence of “systematic and widespread” human rights violations and abuses, including extrajudicial killings, disappearances and forced conscription.

Accountability for the most serious crimes remains critical. We reaffirm our strong support for both the COI and the IIIM.

We fully support Special Envoy Pedersen and a political settlement in line with UN Security Council resolution 2254.

We must support the Syrian population. The limitations to humanitarian access imposed by the Security Council this year were very disappointing.

These decisions are already impacting the delivery of aid and couldn't have come at a worse time, especially in the face of Covid-19.

Finally, we are very concerned about recurring service cuts at the Alouk water pumping station in al-Hassakeh Governorate that supplies half a million people with drinking water. We implore all parties to urgently resolve this issue with the goal of reaching a sustainable solution.

Thank you.

**Interactive dialogue with the Commission of Inquiry
on Burundi
23 September
Statement by Norway on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries**

Madame President,

I have the pleasure of delivering this statement on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries: Estonia, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden and my own country Norway.

We support the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry's report, and look forward to work with the new government in Burundi to improve the situation for human rights in the country. We call upon the government to end human rights violations committed by the security forces and the Imbonerakure, and to ensure that it is disarmed and not used for any official state security or other duties. Members who have committed serious human rights violations should be brought to justice.

We call upon the government to initiate confidence building measures. This should include the release of political prisoners, the reopening of the media and the review of restrictions regulating their work. The return of civil society representatives and opponents in exile, and the opening up of political space and the establishment of an inclusive political dialogue must be ensured.

We urge the government to fully cooperate with the international human rights mechanism put in place, OHCHR and the AU human rights observers. The reopening of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Burundi would be a strong signal and a tangible step forward.

I thank you.

**Interactive dialogue with the Commission on Human Rights
in South Sudan
23 September
Statement by Norway on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries**

Ms. President,

I have the pleasure of delivering this statement on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic Countries Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden and Norway.

We commend the 22 February decision of the Parties to the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan to form the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity. We call upon all parties to cooperate fully in the implementation of the Agreement.

The report of the UN Secretary General presented to the Security Council on September 16 documents serious violations, including conflict-related sexual violence, arbitrary arrests as well as abduction and killing of civilians. The Nordic countries are deeply concerned by the localized cycles of violence and the continued human rights violations and abuses in South Sudan.

We condemn these violations and abuses. All armed groups are responsible for grave human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law, but the Government of South Sudan has the primary responsibility to protect all of its population from these violations and abuses. We urge the Government to ensure the protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and to end impunity for these violations and abuses.

We appreciate the efforts by the Government to assist the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the special procedures of the Human Rights Council and the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan in the fulfilment of its mandate.

We strongly urge the Government to continue to work together with the Commission to ensure accountability and to bring perpetrators to justice.

How can the OHCHR better contribute to prevent future human rights violations in South-Sudan?

Thank you

Panel on rights of indigenous peoples
23 September
Statement by Sweden on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries

Madame President,

I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries: Norway, Finland, Iceland, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, and Denmark together with Greenland and my own country Sweden.

Human rights defenders are critical for the promotion and protection of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Meanwhile, the shrinking democratic space alongside restrictions imposed to tackle covid-19 increase the prevalence of violence and intimidation against them.

It is with deep concern we note that threats and attacks against indigenous human rights defenders, including through the criminalization of their activities, continue to escalate. Defenders protecting the rights of indigenous peoples are particularly vulnerable to violence and killings. Impunity in relation to extrajudicial killings, torture and enforced disappearances as well as reprisals against indigenous representatives participating in United Nations mechanisms are unacceptable.

Indigenous women human rights defenders experience complex, multidimensional and mutually reinforcing human rights violations and abuses; especially so if they challenge traditional gender roles. Despite this, they perform vital work, for instance by promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights for all.

To improve the safety of human rights defenders, we must find flexible, adapted and sustainable methods to assist them, including through cooperation with organisations that provide urgent support mechanisms. We call on all states to protect the rights of indigenous peoples, to protect those defending these rights and to ensure their safety, whether the threat comes from state or non-state actors. Accountability must be ensured.

We would like to ask the panellists how we best can address the heightened level of risk that indigenous human rights defenders experience?

Thank you.

Interactive dialogue with EMRIP
24 September
Statement by Finland on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries

Madame President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the eight Nordic – Baltic countries, Denmark together with Greenland, Estonia, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden and my own country Finland.

We welcome the work of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and welcome its special role in ensuring closer monitoring and focusing efforts on implementation of the articles of the UNDRIP.

The EMRIP has shown innovative approach by establishing new working methods, most notably country engagement missions through the revision of its mandate in September 2016.

The reports under discussion today reflect two important topics. The right to land has a particular meaning for indigenous peoples' identity and culture, indigenous customs and traditions, as well as the collective nature of the indigenous land ownership, while the repatriation of intangible cultural heritage is crucial for indigenous peoples to protect their intellectual property and traditional cultural knowledge.

We welcome the work of international organizations, such as UNESCO and WIPO, in assisting indigenous peoples, states, museums and other stakeholders, in the repatriation of indigenous peoples' ceremonial objects, human remains and intangible cultural heritage.

Members of the EMRIP, in your view, what could be done to better raise awareness among different stakeholders on indigenous peoples' right to land and on the repatriation of ceremonial objects, human remains and intangible cultural heritage?

Thank you.

**Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the rights of
indigenous peoples
24 September
Statement by Denmark on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries**

Madame President/Mr Vice-President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden and my own country Denmark together with Greenland.

In welcoming again Francisco Cali Tzay, as new Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, we thank the previous Special Rapporteur Victoria Tauli-Corpuz for her final report.

We commend Victoria Tauli-Corpuz for the many brave and relevant activities conducted during the last year of her term, including her intervention bringing concrete solutions to injustices against indigenous peoples around the world.

We are deeply concerned by the many examples of criminalization of, and even violence against, indigenous peoples when defending their collective land rights and their access to exercising their human rights. Clearly, the mandate of the Special Rapporteur and the UN at large have an essential role in promoting the rights of indigenous peoples.

We request all States to strengthen their cooperation with the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights on Indigenous Peoples. On a national note, Denmark looks forward to resume the Special Rapporteur's visit to Denmark and Greenland, when circumstances permit.

Mr. Cali Tzay; as incoming Special Rapporteur, what do you see as the most pressing challenges when it comes to the human rights of indigenous peoples today, and where do you expect to put your focus in your work as Special Rapporteur?

Thank you.

**Annual Discussion on Integration of a gender perspective
28 September
Statement by Finland on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries**

Madam President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries, Denmark, Estonia, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden and my own country Finland.

The Nordic-Baltic countries stress the importance of integration and implementation of a gender perspective in the work of the Human Rights Council and the whole of UN. A gender perspective, and multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination must be integrated in Human Rights Council resolutions, and mainstreamed in the work of Special Procedures and in the mandates of fact-finding and monitoring missions.

We thank the panel for highlighting the multiple causes of discrimination that exist. Marginalized individuals or groups more often face intersecting forms of discrimination. However, the notions of ‘vulnerable individuals or groups’ are insufficient. No group or person is inherently vulnerable or one-dimensional. The problem is that they are being discriminated against. And this is what we need to change.

Women and girls with disabilities, who represent almost one-fifth of the world’s women, face significant barriers to realizing their human rights, including the right to work. They experience discrimination on the basis of both gender and disability, and face accessibility barriers to workplaces and a lack of access to education and training. Yet policies and programs routinely overlook their specific situation.

I have a question to panelists: how can we bring the human rights concerns, including multiple forms of discrimination, into the limelight in various UN organizations and increase the awareness of Resident Coordinators and UN country offices?

Thank you.

General debate Item 5
29 September
Statement by Australia on behalf of the Mountain group

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of: Australia, Canada, Iceland, Liechtenstein, New Zealand, Norway and Switzerland.

The Human Rights Council's Special Procedures are an essential element of the international human rights system. We value the work of Special Procedures Mandate Holders in shining a light on human rights violations and abuses, sharing best practice, and promoting accountability.

We agree that Mandate Holders must adhere to the highest standards of conduct, in line with their mandates and the Code of Conduct for Special Procedures Mandate Holders. We applaud their commitment and professionalism.

We regret increasing number of complaints against individual Mandate Holders for simply carrying out their duties as mandated by the Council. Whether intended or not, such claims may have the effect of intimidating not only the targeted Mandate Holders, but also Mandate Holders more generally. We encourage states to raise any complaints through the Internal Advisory Procedure, which is open to member states, civil society and Mandate Holders themselves.

We condemn any acts or threats of intimidation or reprisal against Mandate Holders of this Council as a result of their important work.

We call on all member states to engage cooperatively and constructively with Mandate Holders, including by issuing standing invitations for visits by thematic mandate holders and by allowing country-specific mandate holders to access the countries they are mandated to consider.

**Interactive dialogue on the report of the Group of Eminent International
and Regional Experts on Yemen**

29 September

Statement by Norway on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries

Mme. President,

I have the pleasure of delivering this statement on behalf of the Nordic Baltic countries; Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden and my own country Norway.

I want to thank the Group of Eminent Experts (GEE) for its work. It is regrettable that it has found, yet again, patterns of continued violations by all parties to the conflict. The Nordic Baltic countries supported the establishment of the GEE, and will favor a renewal and strengthening of its mandate. The GEE must be provided with access and sufficient resources.

We note with deep concern reports that all parties to the conflict may be responsible for indiscriminate attacks, the use of children as soldiers, torture, sexual and gender based violence, and serious violations against freedom of expression and belief. We support the GEE's recommendations regarding collection and preservation of evidence with a view to future accountability.

We urge all parties to the conflict to respect international humanitarian and human rights law, and ensure safe humanitarian access. We encourage all states to provide appropriate funding to the humanitarian response. Furthermore, we call on all states to refrain from supplying arms to the parties. We have a moral obligation to support the people of Yemen until a sustainable solution political is reached.

We support the UN Special Envoy and call on the parties to engage with UN efforts for a nationwide ceasefire and political process. Only an inclusive political process, with full participation of women, can resolve the conflict and bring sustainable peace to Yemen.

Thank you.

**Interactive Dialogue with ASG for Human Rights on the SG report on
cooperation with the UN, its representatives and mechanisms in the field
of human rights
30 September
Statement by Lithuania on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries**

Thank you, President.

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Norway, Sweden and my own country Lithuania.

Our countries firmly believe that a vibrant civil society, free from threats, intimidation and reprisals, both online and offline, is essential to the promotion and protection of human rights and creation of free and democratic societies.

We are alarmed by the deteriorating environment for and continued reports of intimidation and reprisals against those engaging with the United Nations in the field of human rights. Unfortunately, the cases mentioned in the Secretary General's report highlight only the tip of the iceberg.

The increase in allegations of reprisals against women or those working on women's enjoyment of human rights and gender-related issues, especially during COVID-19 pandemic, is particularly worrisome.

We call on all states and non-state actors to ensure a safe and enabling space for civil society. The acts of intimidation or reprisals are unacceptable, undermine the credibility and effectiveness of the United Nations as a whole, and should be promptly investigated to ensure accountability and effective remedies for the victims.

We thank the Secretary-General, Assistant Secretary-General and OHCHR for their important work in this field and would like to ask: how can we further address the issue of reprisals in a gender-transformative manner?

General debate Item 8
30 September

Statement by Estonia on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries

Madame President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Nordic and Baltic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Estonia.

At the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993, States agreed, that women and girls' rights should form an integral part of the United Nations human rights activities. Despite the urgent calls in Vienna 27 years ago to intensify efforts for the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights by all women and girls, women and girls continue to face rights violations, including multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and violence. The World Economic Forum concluded last year that none of us will see gender parity in our lifetimes. Nor will probably our children. This shows a clear need to step up our efforts!

We need to adopt a gender transformative approach to all policy fields and invite women to the table, so that we can benefit from the half of the world's talent that often remains underutilized. We also need to start looking at human rights more broadly to brake down silos and have a more holistic approach with the aim to fulfilling the promises of gender equality.

With this in mind, we welcome the initiatives at the Human Rights Council this year, which seek to create synergies between the work done by different UN bodies and mechanism, civil society and other stakeholders. Respecting and promoting women and girls' rights and gender equality, and preventing and addressing discrimination and violence against women and girls are central to the maintenance of international peace and security as recognized by the Security Council resolution 1325 on Women Peace and Security. Failure to ensure accountability fuels impunity and lack of respect, protection and fulfilment of all human rights, including women and girls' rights. Peacebuilding and accountability are both closely tied to our work on human rights where it is important to recognize women and girls' agency.

The Nordic and Baltic countries remain fully committed to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of all, including of all women and girls, and urge all States to fulfill their human rights obligations towards women and girls in their countries.

Thank you!

General debate Item 9
1 October
Statement by Norway on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries

Madam President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Nordic and Baltic countries: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden and my own country, Norway.

19 years after the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, racist statements and negative stereotypes, attitudes and prejudices are still far too common. This is a problem in many countries – including our region.

Racist statements and negative stereotypes based on their ethnicity, colour of skin or religion affect individuals. However, it must not be seen and dealt with as a problem affecting only individuals or minority groups. This is a challenge for our democratic societies. This creates exclusion, fear and lower social mobility and is detrimental to the trust needed to safeguard and develop inclusive communities free of prejudice.

In our countries – as in other countries across the world, people are mobilizing against racism.

This clear call for change and action from civil society must be followed up by political action by member states. Specific and targeted measures are needed. Such measures could include national action plans, campaigns against discrimination at restaurants, clubs et cetera, combating hate speech and a hostile debate environment and developing arenas for dialogue.

President,

We need to strengthen our co-operation to create robust and inclusive democracies that promote dialogue, freedom of expression and diversity.

Our common goal is societies based on tolerance, freedom and justice, in which everyone enjoys equal opportunities, regardless of ethnicity, colour of skin or religion.

Thank you.

**Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of
human rights in Cambodia
1 October
Statement by Denmark on behalf of the Nordic countries**

Madam President,

I have the honor of delivering this statement on behalf of the Nordic countries. We thank Ms. Smith for her important work on the human rights situation in Cambodia.

We are very concerned about the human rights situation in Cambodia, in particular as concerns repression of the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association. There are alarming reports of arrests of human rights defenders, religious leaders and opposition members, and of unnecessary and excessive use of force against women demonstrators. Democracy and the rule of law are prerequisites for the full enjoyment of all human rights.

We urge the Government to protect and respect all human rights, including civil and political rights, and to reverse the shrinking democratic space, including for civil society. We call on the Government to release all those detained for exercising their human rights, and to bring an end to the intimidation of civil society actors.

Ms. Smith, what do you see as the most important steps for the Government to take to reverse the shrinking of democratic space, including for civil society?

I thank you.

**Enhanced ID on HC report on the Democratic Republic of Congo and
final report of experts on Kasai
2 October
Statement by Sweden on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries**

Mr/Mme Chairperson,

I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the Nordic and Baltic countries: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and my own country, Sweden.

The human rights situation in DRC remains serious and of deep concern. Summary executions, arbitrary detentions and sexual violence and gender-based violence occur frequently. In the past year, we have seen an increase in the number of human rights violations by members of armed groups in the conflict-affected parts of the country. Tackling impunity is key to ending violence.

Let me reiterate: the murders of UN experts Zaida Catalán and Michael Sharp in 2017 must be fully and thoroughly investigated and those responsible brought to justice. We welcome the extension of the UN Follow-On Mechanism and note the arrest of one of the suspected perpetrators. Hopefully this will lead to progress in the judicial proceedings which we hope can be resumed within short.

We are deeply concerned about the death threats directed at Nobel Peace Prize Co-Laureate Dr Mukwege and join the High Commissioner in her call for a swift investigation into the matter. An effective and sustainable solution must be found together with national authorities to ensure that the vital work at the Panzi hospital can continue.

Thank you

**Interactive dialogue with the Independent Expert on
the situation of human rights in Somalia
2 October
Statement by Sweden on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries**

Mme President,

I make this statement on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries. We welcome Ms. Dyfan as new Independent Expert.

We welcome the progress Somalia has made, including on human rights. But many challenges remain.

We note with serious concern proposals of a new Sexual Intercourse Related Crimes Bill and proposed constitutional changes on the legal definition of a child, which violates Somalia's human rights obligations.

Dealing with the high prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence in Somalia would benefit from a clear and human rights-anchored legal framework. The Cabinet approved Sexual Offences Bill from 2018 would provide such a framework and we therefore echo calls to re-introduce this Bill in parliament.

We welcome efforts made to find an agreement to ensure peaceful transition of power. It is however regrettable that elements of one person-one vote will not be part of the coming elections. We call on Somalia to continue to work towards democratic reforms, including ensuring freedom of the media, and to step up efforts to finalize the constitutional review, while remaining mindful of the importance of a revised constitution that honours Somalia's human rights obligations.

Our countries' stand ready to continue working with and supporting Somalia to strengthen the human rights protection for its people.

Thank you.

**Enhanced Interactive Dialogue with the Independent Expert on the
situation of human rights in the Sudan
2 October
Statement by Iceland on behalf of the Nordic countries**

Madame President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Nordic countries. We thank the Independent Expert for his report and the panelists for participating today.

We are encouraged by the progress made in Sudan and positive steps taken by the transitional Government to address systemic human rights and rule-of-law concerns. This includes commitments to tackle impunity and ensure accountability for past and recent crimes, including in cooperation with the ICC, as well as efforts to reach comprehensive peace agreements across the country.

However, we recognize that major challenges lie ahead which necessitate continuous engagement, advocacy and programmatic intervention. This will require sustained international support and engagement and we underline the important role OHCHR must play in this regard. We welcome that OHCHR's Country Office is now operational in Sudan and look forward to close cooperation between this Office and UNITAMS.

We reiterate that for Sudan to break from its past and continue on the path to democracy, all human rights must be ensured for all, including human rights defenders, journalists and political opponents. We would like to ask, how can we and the Office best support Sudan in its next phase of technical assistance for the protection of human rights?

Thank you.

Interactive Dialogue with Fact-Finding Mission on Libya
5 October
Statement by Finland on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries

Madam President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Nordic and Baltic countries: Denmark, Estonia, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Finland.

We express our support to the UN fact-finding mission on Libya established in June 2020 by the UN Human Rights Council (resolution for a period of one year, to investigate violations and abuses of human rights throughout Libya by all parties since the beginning of 2016).

We are deeply concerned by the findings of the UN Mission in Libya UNSMIL who has registered an increase in reports of human rights violations, including arbitrary arrests and detention, restrictions on freedom of expression, as well as on the right of peaceful assembly and protest in Libya. These rights fall within Libya's obligations under international human rights law. We call on the Libyan authorities to investigate all allegations of excessive use of force as well as all violations of human rights.

Furthermore, we welcome the opening of investigations by the International Criminal Court (ICC) into possible war crimes and crimes against humanity following the discovery of multiple mass graves in Tarhuna. The perpetrators have to be held accountable for their acts.

We call on all parties to the conflict to allow the FFM and the ICC an unhindered access to fulfil their missions. Reprisals against civil society cooperating with international mechanisms must come to end.

An inclusive, Libyan owned and Libyan led political process is the only sustainable way forward in Libya. It is of utmost importance to seize foreign interference in the conflict, put an end to the UN arms embargo violations and support the Libyan people in finding a peaceful way out of the conflict.

Thank you.