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**Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner
for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the
High Commissioner and the Secretary-General**

Human rights bodies and mechanisms

Cooperation with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights^{*, **}

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted to the Human Rights Council pursuant to Council resolution 12/2. In the report, the Secretary-General highlights the recent developments in the United Nations system and beyond in relation to the issue of reprisals. He presents the activities of the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights as the senior official leading the efforts of the United Nations to address acts of intimidation and reprisal against those seeking to cooperate or who have cooperated with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms on human rights. The report also contains information on alleged acts of intimidation and reprisals, including in follow-up to cases included in the previous report (A/HRC/33/19). More extensive information on selected cases has also been attached (see annex I). The Secretary-General concludes the report with recommendations on addressing and preventing all such cases.

* The present report was submitted after the deadline in order to include the most recent information.
** The annexes to the present report are reproduced as received.



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I. Introduction

1. The Human Rights Council, in its resolution 12/2, expressed concern over continued reports of intimidation and reprisals against individuals and groups seeking to cooperate or have cooperated with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights, and deep concern at the seriousness of such reported acts. The Council further condemned all acts of intimidation and reprisal committed by Governments and non-State actors, and invited me to submit a report to the Council at its fourteenth session and annually thereafter, containing a compilation and analysis of any available information, from all appropriate sources, on alleged reprisals as well as recommendations on how to address this issue. This present report is the eighth prepared pursuant to resolution 12/2.¹

II. Developments in response to acts of intimidation and reprisal

2. Alarmed by the increase in the number of reported cases of intimidation and reprisal for cooperation with the United Nations on human rights, in October 2016 the previous Secretary-General designated the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights as senior official to lead efforts within the United Nations system to address intimidation and reprisals against those cooperating with the United Nations on human rights. This decision reflected the recognition by the Organization that such acts are unacceptable, and underscored the need to strengthen action across the system to prevent, respond to and address them. Addressing reprisals and intimidation is a priority and a core responsibility of the Organization as a whole.

3. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights addressed the issue of reprisals brought on by State officials against people who engage with the United Nations on human rights on several occasions, in particular on 7 June 2017, in his statement to the Human Rights Council at its thirty-fifth session. He emphasized that his own staff, special procedures and treaty bodies rely on members of civil society and national human rights institutions, alongside many others, for insight and information. He stressed that, when government or other officials intimidated, arrested or harmed individuals, they attacked a fundamental element of the work of the United Nations.

4. Several States and non-governmental organizations have also delivered statements on the issue of reprisals; for example, on 16 March 2017, during the thirty-fourth session of the Human Rights Council, the core group on reprisals (Fiji, Ghana, Hungary, Ireland and Uruguay), speaking on behalf of a group of 67 States, expressed deep concern over continued reprisals, urged all States to prevent and refrain from committing such acts, and welcomed the designation of a senior official to lead efforts by the United Nations on this issue.

5. During their annual meeting in July 2016, the Chairs of human rights treaty bodies recommended the implementation by all treaty bodies of the Guidelines against Intimidation or Reprisals (“San Jose Guidelines”) (HRI/MC/2015/6) adopted at their 2015 meeting (see A/71/270). To date, the Guidelines have been endorsed by 8 out of the 10 treaty bodies, which have appointed dedicated rapporteurs, focal points or working groups on reprisals and intimidation to align different approaches taken by the treaty bodies and to propose action.

6. As part of the enhanced response of the special procedures to reprisals adopted in 2015, in June 2016, Catalina Devandas Aguilar, the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities, was appointed focal point in the Coordination Committee of special procedures. The annual report of special procedures for 2017 included a section on intimidation and reprisals, explaining the various measures taken by mandate holders to respond to such acts, which had been observed to have become increasingly severe in nature (A/HRC/34/34, chap. IV). On 15 March 2017, the Chair of the Coordination Committee, presenting the annual report of special procedures to the Human Rights Council at its thirty-fourth session, affirmed the dedication of mandate holders to combating reprisals against those cooperating with them, which, she underscored, undermined the ability of special procedures to carry out their work.

¹ See A/HRC/14/19, A/HRC/18/19, A/HRC/21/18, A/HRC/24/29, A/HRC/27/38, A/HRC/30/29 and A/HRC/33/19.

7. Within the United Nations system, initiatives have also been taken to raise awareness about this issue; for example, in the guidance note on human rights for Resident Coordinators and United Nations country teams for 2016, the important role that field presences play in the context of addressing reprisals and intimidation was specifically identified. The note also underlined the fact that addressing the risk of reprisals and protecting the safety of individuals requires a coordinated and unified response by Resident Coordinators and United Nations country teams, including by calling upon the United Nations Development Group and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) where necessary.

8. To build upon the ongoing work of these other actors, in this initial phase of his work, the designated senior official leading efforts within the United System is focusing on three areas: (a) enhancing high-level engagement on the issue of reprisals, including to prevent them and ensure appropriate action when they are committed, in particular urgent cases; (b) developing a more comprehensive response for preventing and addressing intimidation and reprisals throughout the United Nations system; and (c) ensuring cooperation with all actors, especially Member States and civil society actors, in strengthening the efforts already under way.

9. As an essential aspect of his activities, the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights has addressed specific situations and individual cases with Member States in intergovernmental forums and through quiet diplomacy with the Governments concerned. This engagement has involved the Human Rights Council, the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, as well as Permanent Representatives to the United Nations. Relying on information received from United Nations partners, human rights mechanisms, civil society and directly from individuals and groups affected, he has raised specific urgent cases, persistent patterns of intimidation and reprisal, situations where action by other actors has not produced any tangible change, and other incidents at Headquarters and during field visits.

10. The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights has also engaged in outreach to human rights bodies and mechanisms, such as the President of the Human Rights Council, the special procedures, treaty bodies, the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and Resident Coordinators, human rights focal points throughout the United Nations Secretariat, and United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. A mapping exercise of existing response mechanisms among United Nations entities has been initiated, and will inform the development of a more comprehensive system for documenting and responding to cases of intimidation and reprisal throughout the Organization.

11. To ensure the visibility and accessibility of the work on intimidation and reprisals and the activities of the United Nations human rights mechanisms in this regard, a dedicated website was launched in June 2017, including on how to submit information to relevant bodies.² Special procedures have also launched their own page on this issue.

III. Ensuring access to the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights

12. The previous Secretary-General raised the role of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, which considers applications for consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, in previous reports. He urged the Committee to apply the criteria for assessing organizations in a fair and transparent manner, given that civil society organizations provide an indispensable contribution to the work and very purposes of the United Nations, which would be impossible without their access to international meetings at United Nations premises and their ability to engage directly with human rights mechanisms. This issue was addressed by special procedure mandate holders in a letter in April 2017 to the Committee (A/HRC/36/25, para. 13, OTH 5/2017), in which they raised concerns about the Committee's decisions regarding the granting of accreditation to civil society organizations, and about their working methods in general, which could, according to the mandate holders, may hamper civil society access to the United Nations, and thus will affect their participation.

² See OHCHR webpage, "Acts of intimidation and reprisal for cooperation with the United Nations in the field of human rights" (www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Reprisals/Pages/ReprisalsIndex.aspx).

They also expressed their particular concern at the arbitrary deferral of applications for consultative status of non-governmental organizations, which could prevent them from engaging with United Nations bodies and human rights mechanisms. The Committee Chair responded to the concerns raised by pointing out the public sessions of the Committee would now be webcast. I welcome these developments, which will bring more transparency to the work of the Committee, and call upon the Committee to apply the criteria for assessing organizations in a fair and transparent manner.

IV. Information received on cases of intimidation or reprisal for cooperation with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights

A. General comments

13. The present report includes cases based on information gathered from 1 June 2016 to 31 May 2017. In accordance with Human Rights Council resolutions 12/2 and 24/24, it also contains information on acts of intimidation or reprisal against those who:

- Seek to cooperate, or have cooperated with, the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights, or who have provided testimony or information to them;
- Avail or have availed themselves of procedures established under the auspices of the United Nations for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and all those who have provided legal or other assistance to them for that purpose;
- Submit or have submitted communications under procedures established by human rights instruments, and all those who have provided legal or other assistance to them for that purpose;
- Are relatives of victims of human rights violations or of those who have provided legal or other assistance to victims.

14. The information received was verified and corroborated by primary and other sources to the maximum extent possible. Reference is made to the various United Nations publications in which the cases included in the present report were first made public. Responses provided by Governments by 31 July 2017, whether in writing or orally during sessions of United Nations human rights bodies and mechanisms, have also been included. Efforts were also made to follow up on cases included in the report of the previous Secretary-General (see annex II).

15. The present report does not attempt to provide an exhaustive list of cases. In preparing it, the principle of “do no harm” and the consent of alleged victims to be named was strictly adhered to, and a risk assessment made for each case received and deemed credible. As a result, it was decided not to include cases where the risk to the security and well-being of the individuals concerned, or their family members, was deemed too high. Furthermore, a number of cases brought to my attention have been addressed confidentially and may not figure in the report.

16. During the period under review, individuals and groups wishing to engage with the United Nations human rights system have experienced acts of intimidation and reprisal for their engagement with a wide range of bodies, processes and actors. I have received information on threats, intimidation or reprisals against those who engaged on human rights issues with the Human Rights Council, the special procedures, the treaty bodies and the universal periodic review mechanism. Contacts with OHCHR or human rights components of peace missions were also not exempt from these types of retributions, for example the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). Others have also suffered serious consequences for attempting to travel to and report at sessions of the

International Labour Organization or the meetings of the Copenhagen Framework Convention on Climate Change. Some actors have received threats, in some cases death threats, for merely having participated in training programmes organized by United Nations peacekeeping forces.

17. Some allegations of reprisals have been addressed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the President of the Human Rights Council, OHCHR field presences and peace missions. As the senior official leading on response to reprisals, the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights conducted meetings with State representatives and sent letters to Governments on cases where individuals engaging on human rights with OHCHR field presences were threatened owing to their activities by local authorities; on draft legislation restricting cooperation with foreign organizations without prior authorization; where individuals were prevented from cooperating with human rights mechanisms; where the accreditation of a human rights defender was revoked by the United Nations; or in cases of reprisals for cooperation with human rights components of peace missions.

18. Similarly, the past two Presidents of the Human Rights Council used their good offices to address allegations of intimidation and reprisals experienced by those engaging with the Council, such as travel bans, intimidation of civil society representatives by permanent missions, defamatory or threatening media campaigns, or harassment, arbitrary arrests or prosecution following engagement with the Council and its mechanisms, including directly with the diplomatic representatives of six countries. Such action helps to draw further attention to these cases and encourages positive action by Governments.

B. Summary of cases

19. Further information about the cases described below is available in annex I.

1. Algeria

20. On 31 March 2017, some mandate holders raised concerns with the Government of Algeria over allegations of reprisals against Rafik Belamrania, founding member of Association pour les enfants des disparus forcés en Algérie – Mish'al, for publishing on Facebook, on 14 February 2017, a decision made by the Human Rights Committee regarding the summary execution of his father in 1995 (see A/HRC/36/25, para. 13, DZA 2/2017).

2. Bahrain

21. In the light of an ongoing trend of major harassment and intimidation against human rights defenders, the imposition of travel bans on selected individuals, the arrest, detention, and ill-treatment of targeted individuals, and one particular case involving sexual assault and torture as a form of reprisal, allegations were addressed by special procedure mandate holders and the President of the Human Rights Council who were in contact with the Government of Bahrain on these cases. The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights addressed allegations on cases in writing to the Government. Special procedures have expressed concerns about an orchestrated crackdown on civil society, stressing that the authorities have resorted to drastic measures to curb dissenting opinions, including reprisals for cooperating with the United Nations, and in particular with OHCHR (see A/HRC/34/75, para. 10, BHR 4/2016 and BHR 7/2016).

22. Several allegations were received by special procedures about travel bans allegedly imposed on human rights defenders for their cooperation with the United Nations and its mechanism of human rights, including with the Human Rights Council, and with the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change at its twenty-second session, or human rights workshops.

23. On 21 June 2016, the spokesperson of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed deep concern that Nabeel Rajab, a co-founder of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, was arrested on 13 June 2016 for “spreading false news and rumours about the internal situation in a bid to discredit Bahrain”. He had been subject to a travel ban since at least January 2015. The High Commissioner is concerned that these and subsequent actions against Mr. Rajab are connected to his engagement with the Human Rights Council.

3. Burundi

24. The Committee against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment took action on allegations of reprisals against representatives of Burundian non-governmental organizations that sent reports and participated in the Committee's session, at which the situation in Burundi was reviewed. Four representatives were lawyers, three of whom have been subsequently disbarred and one suspended for one year at the request of the Attorney General of Bujumbura. The Committee expressed its concern that the request of the Attorney General related to the cooperation of these members of civil society with it. The Committee has been in contact with the Government on this matter (see CAT/C/BDI/CO/2/Add.1).

25. The experts conducting the independent investigation on Burundi carried out pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution S-24/1, in their report (A/HRC/33/37), also raised concerns regarding the threat of reprisals for those individuals who cooperated or who wished to cooperate with the investigation, noting that the investigation faced several challenges, including the fact that two of its four planned visits could not be carried out. They further noted that some victims and witnesses feared reprisals. In their recommendations, the experts stressed that the Government should immediately cease its reprisals and threats against individuals who cooperated with the experts and other human rights mechanisms and organizations.

26. On 14 June 2017, the chair of the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi briefed the Human Rights Council, and stated that the Commission had received information from a large number of exiled Burundians who were afraid to provide testimonies for fear of reprisal. In the briefing, she pointed out that, similarly, human rights defenders who still operated in the country found it hard to gather testimonies from victims inside the country for fear of exposing themselves and the victims to the risk of reprisal.

27. In March 2017, the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights informed the Peacebuilding Commission and members of the Security Council about allegations of reprisals against persons who had cooperated or sought to cooperate with the United Nations, including with OHCHR in Bujumbura.

4. China

28. In the course of 2016, several allegations of reprisals against individuals in relation to meetings with the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, during his visit to China in August 2016, were received by special procedure mandate holders, who took action and have been in contact with the Government (see A/HRC/34/75, para. 10, CHN 9/2016 and CHN 13/2016).

29. On 26 April 2017, a Uyghur human rights activist and member of the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization, Dolkun Isa, who was attending the annual Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples at United Nations Headquarters, was escorted from the premises pending further examination following the receipt of information from representatives of China alleging "security reasons". As a result, Mr. Isa was unable to resume his participation in the Forum.

5. Cuba

30. On 18 October 2016, some mandate holders raised with the Government of Cuba allegations of harassment and reprisal against human rights defenders and members of the Cubalex Legal Information Center for their cooperation with the United Nations in the field of human rights (see A/HRC/34/75, para. 10, CUB 3/2016). The allegations were mainly in relation to the cooperation of advocates with the Human Rights Council, its special procedures and the universal periodic review mechanism, who were stopped and questioned at the airport and harassed by immigration agents. Furthermore, on 23 September 2016, the offices of Cubalex were raided.

6. Egypt

31. Allegations of reprisals in the form of travel bans against human rights defenders attempting to participate in human rights meetings were acted upon by special procedure mandate holders (see A/HRC/34/75, para. 10, EGY 15/2016)³. Some of these allegations were related to participation in the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Climate Change Framework Convention and in training on gender equality and women's rights. Allegations of reprisals against civil society in the form of asset freezes were raised by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders (A/HRC/34/52/Add.1, para. 662). Staff members of the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies and members of their families allege to have been targeted for their cooperation with the universal periodic review mechanism and for having meetings with representatives of the United Nations.

32. On 22 November 2016, three mandate holders raised concerns with the Government of Egypt about draft legislation on non-governmental organizations, including a provision restricting cooperation with foreign organizations without prior authorization (see A/HRC/34/75, para. 10, EGY 14/2016). The experts were concerned that the draft legislation would impose severe restrictions on civil society organizations and impinge on the exercise of the rights to freedom of expression and freedom of association. In April 2017, the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights addressed concerns about the implications of the proposed legislation and raised individual cases with the Government.

33. On 3 May 2017, four mandate holders expressed concerns about the abduction, detention, torture and ill-treatment of Dr. Ahmed Shawky Abdelsattar Mohamed Amasha, reportedly in retaliation for his activities as a human rights defender. Those activities included documenting cases of enforced disappearances for special procedures (see A/HRC/36/25, para. 13, EGY 5/2017).

7. Eritrea

34. In its final report to the Human Rights Council in June 2016, the commission of inquiry on human rights in Eritrea highlighted its finding that the protection of witnesses and victims continued to be a central concern during the commission's mandate, and that almost all victims and witnesses who spoke with the commission feared reprisals by Eritrean authorities, either against themselves or their family members in Eritrea (A/HRC/32/47, para. 8). In this context, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea reiterated in her statement to the General Assembly, in October 2016, her commitment to address reprisals against those who had cooperated with the commission or with her mandate, and to ensure that appropriate follow-up was conducted by relevant mechanisms. In its resolution 35/35, the Human Rights Council encouraged States in which witnesses resided to protect from reprisals those who had cooperated with the commission of inquiry and the Special Rapporteur.

8. Honduras

35. On 22 September 2015, the e-mail accounts of Asociación para una Ciudadanía Participativa, a non-governmental organization, were reportedly hacked. On 2 March 2017, Hedme Castro, general coordinator of the association, was briefly held at Tegucigalpa airport, where she was preparing to board a flight to Geneva to participate in the thirty-fourth session of the Human Rights Council. Ms. Castro was reportedly questioned about the activities scheduled in Geneva and the human rights-related complaints she intended to make. She was also subjected to further acts of intimidation, in April and May, when the tyres of her car were slashed and when she was assaulted during a demonstration against a mining company. Special procedures took action in response to these allegations and have been in contact with the Government thereon. The Assistant Secretary-General has also addressed cases with the Government.

³ See also OHCHR, "Egypt steps up travel bans on rights defenders with 'chilling effect', UN expert warns", press release, 24 November 2016.

9. India

36. Allegations were received about intimidation and reprisals against Khurram Parvez in relation to his cooperation with the Human Rights Council, the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances and the universal periodic review mechanism. The reprisals allegedly took the form of a travel ban and arbitrary arrest and detention. Special procedures took action on these allegations, and have been in contact with the Government of India in that regard (A/HRC/34/75, para. 10, IND 7/2016 and IND 9/2016).

10. Iran (Islamic Republic of)

37. In presenting to the Human Rights Council in March 2017 the report of the Secretary-General on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran (A/HRC/34/40), the Deputy United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights stressed that reprisals against individuals cooperating or establishing contact with United Nations human rights mechanisms had been reported. In the report, it was stressed that allegations of reprisals against such individuals remained a cause of great concern; reference was made in particular to a press statement issued by special procedure mandate holders, in November 2016, in which they urged the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to end its harassment of Raheleh Rahemipor. The mandate holders referred in particular to the fact that Ms. Rahemipor was the sister of Hossein Rahemipor, whose case was under review by the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, and to the continued harassment of Ms. Rahemipor, including the incidents during which she was questioned repeatedly in August 2016 by the relevant authorities about the complaint sent to the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (see A/HRC/34/75, para. 10, IRN 23/2016 and IRN 29/2016; and A/HRC/35/44, para. 12, IRN 3/2017).

11. Israel

38. In his report submitted to the Human Rights Council at its thirty-fourth session (A/HRC/34/70), the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 highlighted an increasingly virulent environment for human rights defenders working on issues related to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including those addressing issues in United Nations forums. He reported that, following a statement made in October 2016 to the Security Council, the Director-General of B'Tselem, Hagai El-Ad, together with Lara Friedman of Americans for Peace Now, was publicly condemned by high-level Israeli officials; one Member of Parliament called for the revocation of his citizenship. Mr. El-Ad had warned of the expansion of settlements and the deteriorating situation of human rights for Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (A/HRC/34/70, para. 47).

39. The above mentioned report followed a joint press statement issued on 16 December 2016 by the Special Rapporteur and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, in which they expressed their concerns for human rights activists working in the Occupied Palestinian Territory who had been subjected to harassment and threats while seeking to promote accountability and engage with the International Criminal Court.⁴ Nada Kiswanson, a human rights lawyer in The Hague, where she represents Al-Haq, an organization that documents violations of Palestinians' rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory regardless of the identity of the perpetrator, is alleged to have been subjected to death threats and accusations linked to her work before the International Criminal Court (see A/HRC/34/70, para. 44).

12. Mauritania

40. On 11 October 2016, seven special procedure mandate holders expressed their concerns about grave violations in Mauritania of the judicial process, including allegations of torture following the arrest, arbitrary detention and sentencing to prison of 13 members of Initiative pour la résurgence du mouvement abolitionniste. The mandate holders also

⁴ OHCHR, "Human rights defenders under growing legal pressure in the OPT – UN rights experts", press release, 16 December 2016.

expressed their concerns about the possible link between those acts and the members having cooperated with the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights during his visit to the country (A/HRC/34/75, para. 10, MRT 2/2016).

13. Mexico

41. On 4 August 2015, the Committee against Torture, in *Ramirez et al. v. Mexico*, found violations of articles 1, 2 (1), 12-15 and 22 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (see CAT/C/55/D/500/2012). On 19 May and 19 September 2016, the complainants submitted that they had suffered acts of intimidation and harassment by the authorities as a result of the Committee's decision. The acts allegedly took the form of a campaign aimed at stigmatizing the complainants as criminals and re-victimizing them. The Committee has transmitted the complainant's submission to the State party for observations (see CAT/C/59/3, paras. 23-24).

14. Morocco

42. On 3 August 2016, the Committee against Torture, in *Abdul Rahman Alhaj Ali v. Morocco*, found that the extradition of Abdul Rahman Alhaj Ali would constitute a breach of article 3 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (see CAT/C/58/D/682/2015). The complainant, a Syrian national registered with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and seeking asylum in Morocco, was detained in Morocco in October 2014 on an extradition request by Saudi Arabia for "breach of trust" based on previous business relations in Riyadh. Abdul Rahman Alhaj Ali was in extradition detention for almost two years, far in excess of the 60-day pretrial period provided for in Morocco, when the Committee issued the decision. According to information received by the Committee, the prolongation of his detention was reportedly related to the complaint made to the Committee on his behalf on 22 May 2015. On 10 March 2017, in the light of the gravity of the complainant's allegations, the Committee's rapporteurs on reprisals and follow-up requested the State party urgently to provide the Committee with clarifications on the situation of the complainant by 31 March 2017.

15. Myanmar

43. Special procedure mandate holders have received allegations of intimidation and reprisals against individuals who have engaged with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar during her visits to the country. They have been in contact with the Government on the matter (see A/HRC/34/75, para. 10, MMR 2/2016). For example, it is alleged that the arrest and detention of Khine Myo Htun, a political and environmental activist, was linked to his cooperation with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, with whom he met during her visit in June 2016 shortly before he was detained. Mr. Htun, who is also an official of the Arakan Liberation Party, had issued a written statement criticizing the impact of State military actions on civilians in Rakhine State in the ongoing conflict in that region.

44. The Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar also addressed the issue in her end-of-mission statement of 21 July 2016 and in a press release on 24 January 2017.⁵ She reiterated that the Government of Myanmar must ensure the safety of all her interlocutors and guarantee that they would not face any reprisals, including threats, harassment, punishment or judicial proceedings. The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights addressed the allegations with the Government in June 2017.

45. Following reports of reprisals against persons cooperating with various entities of the United Nations, the Human Rights Council emphasized in its resolution 34/22 on the human rights situation in Myanmar that no one should face reprisals, monitoring, surveillance, threats, harassment or intimidation for cooperating or speaking with special procedures, including the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, the international independent fact-finding mission or the United Nations. It called upon the

⁵ OHCHR, "UN human rights expert concerned about reprisals during recent visit to Myanmar", press release, 24 January 2017.

Government to take appropriate measures to prevent such acts, and to combat impunity by investigating promptly and effectively all allegations of intimidation and reprisals in order to bring perpetrators to justice and to provide victims with appropriate remedies.

16. Oman

46. On 27 June 2016, five special procedure mandate holders expressed their concerns about the alleged arbitrary arrest and detention of Said Ali Said Jadad, a human rights defender, journalist and blogger, for his human rights activities, and the alleged continued acts of reprisal for his cooperation with the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association during the visit made by the Special Rapporteur to Oman in September 2014, and for Mr. Jadad's cooperation with international organizations (see A/HRC/34/75, para. 10, OMN 1/2016). In a letter dated 2 September 2016, the Government of Oman responded to the concerns raised, and informed the mandate holders that, as a result of their appeal, Mr. Jadad's case had been re-examined, and that he had been released from detention on 26 August 2016.

17. Pakistan

47. On 18 April 2017, the National Commission for Human Rights of Pakistan was due to brief the Committee against Torture during its sixtieth session, following the submission of an alternative report to the Committee. The request made by the Commission Chair for permission to travel to Geneva was denied on the basis that the national human rights institution was "not mandated to interact with the UN Committee on the present issue". Representatives of the Commission were eventually able to participate in a private meeting with the Committee via video link on 18 April 2017. In its concluding observations, the Committee referred to its serious concern that the Chair of the Commission had not receive the authorization, which was reportedly required in Pakistan for the National Commission for Human Rights to be able to travel to participate in a private meeting with the Committee (CAT/C/PAK/CO/1, para. 20).

18. Rwanda

48. Special procedure mandate holders took action in response to allegations of intimidation and reprisals against two human rights defenders, Epimack Kwokwo and Robert Mugabe, for their cooperation with the universal periodic review, the Human Rights Council and special procedures. The allegations also drew attention to the declaration that Mr. Kwokwo was *persona non grata* in Rwanda and to his subsequent expulsion from the country, and the attempted kidnapping and intense daily interrogation of Mr. Mugabe (see A/HRC/34/75, para. 10, RWA 1/2016 and A/HRC/35/44, para. 12, RWA 1/2017). The mandate holders have been in contact with the Government of Rwanda on these cases.

19. Saudi Arabia

49. Special procedure mandate holders took action on the case of Issa Al-Hamid, a human rights defender and member of the Saudi Civil and Political Rights Association, who was sentenced to 11 years in prison followed by an 11-year travel ban and a fine of 100,000 Riyals. He was originally sentenced to nine years by the Specialized Criminal Court for, *inter alia*, having "communicated with international organizations in order to harm the image of the State", a charge that, according to special procedures, appears to also constitute an act of reprisal for cooperating with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights. His sentence was increased by two years on 1 December 2016 by the Court of Appeal. Mandate holders have been in contact with the Government of Saudi Arabia on this case (see A/HRC/35/44, para. 12, SAU 8/2016).

20. South Sudan

50. In the special report on the review of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) (S/2016/951), the Secretary-General pointed out that United Nations human rights officers faced limited access to affected areas to corroborate information or interview witnesses and victims for many reasons, including restrictions imposed by government authorities, security considerations for staff members and increasing threats of

reprisal against witnesses, victims and sources, which raised the need to ensure their protection.

51. During his visit to South Sudan in February 2017, the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights met with a number of government authorities, including cabinet ministers and heads of security forces, to whom he stressed the absolute need to avoid reprisals and threats against human rights defenders who have cooperated with the United Nations. He addressed specific cases of individuals cooperating with UNMISS and with United Nations entities abroad, including those cases in which individuals were forced to leave South Sudan due to intimidation and threats. In this connection, he drew attention to a specific incident, in September 2016, in which human rights defenders were threatened following their meeting with members of the Security Council during their visit to South Sudan. In July 2017, he also addressed the situation of reprisals to the Government of South Sudan in writing.⁶

21. Sri Lanka

52. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in his address to the Human Rights Council on 22 March 2017, stressed that he was disturbed to hear reports of intimidation of members of Sri Lankan civil society in the Palais des Nations in Geneva. He referred the case to the Assistant Secretary-General, trusting that the President of the Council would pay these cases the close attention they warranted.

53. In his report to the Human Rights Council at its thirty-fourth session (A/HRC/34/20), the High Commissioner stressed that reports of harassment or surveillance of human rights defenders and victims of violations had continued in Sri Lanka, albeit to a lesser degree. Special procedure mandate holders also addressed the allegations of acts of reprisal and intimidation against S. Ganeshnantham and other members of the Pupil Salvation Forum, a civil society organization, relating to their participation in the thirty-fourth session of the Council (see A/HRC/36/25, para. 13, LKA 1/2017).

22. Sudan

54. On 28 July 2016, the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan expressed his concerns regarding the interception of four representatives of Sudanese civil society at Khartoum International Airport on their way to Geneva, where they were to participate in pre-session meetings of the universal periodic review on the Sudan (A/HRC/33/65, para. 28).

55. On 9 January 2017, special procedure mandate holders expressed their concerns to the Government of the Sudan with regard to allegations of reprisals against six human rights defenders, staff members and affiliates of the Centre for Training and Human Development, reportedly in part because of their cooperation with the Human Rights Council (see A/HRC/35/44, para. 12, SDN 1/2017).

23. Tajikistan

56. On 2 June 2016, the Supreme Court of Tajikistan sentenced leaders of the banned Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan to life imprisonment and jail terms ranging from two to 28 years. On the same day, and in direct response to the conviction, relatives of those convicted intending to seek assistance from the United Nations office in Tajikistan and to reach the premises of the United Nations were detained by law enforcement officials. On 7 June 2016, the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression stated that he had received disturbing reports that relatives of the members convicted had been prevented by the police from reaching the United Nations office after the verdict was announced, and had been taken to a district court, where they were threatened to be arrested and fined for not obeying the police. The Special Rapporteur found the situation to be totally unacceptable, and that it furthered the climate of fear in the country.⁷

⁶ See also OHCHR, "South Sudan: Senior UN human rights official condemns deplorable rights situation, calls for perpetrators to be held to account", press release, 17 February 2017.

⁷ OHCHR, "UN expert deplors harsh sentencing of Tajikistan opposition leaders and warns of radicalization", press release, 7 June 2016.

24. Thailand

57. In June 2016, grant recipients of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, human rights defenders Pornpen Khongkachonkiet and Somchai Homlaor of the Cross-Cultural Foundation and Anchana Heemmina of the Duay Jai Group, became the object of a legal complaint filed by the Royal Thai Army operating in the Southern Border Provinces. The abovementioned persons had published a report, in February 2016, on cases of torture and ill-treatment in the Deep South documented in 2014-2015, funded in part by the United Nations Voluntary Fund. They were consequently accused of publishing false information on torture and ill-treatment committed by military officials. On 11 February 2016, the spokesperson of the Royal Thai Army in the region issued a public statement, accusing the organization of bias and of using outdated information to seek funding. Special procedure mandate holders shared their concerns with the Government of Thailand about the allegations (see A/HRC/34/75, para. 11, THA 6/2016).

25. Turkey

58. On 23 January 2017, special procedure mandate holders raised concerns with the Government of Turkey with regard to allegations of reprisals against Osman Isci, an academic researcher and human rights defender, who was suspended from his research position at Agri Ibrahim Cecen University by emergency decree for his cooperation with the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression during the mandate holder's official visit to Turkey in November 2016 (see A/HRC/35/44, para. 12, TUR 1/2017). In January 2016, Osman Isci, together with more than 180 other academic and university researchers, signed a "peace petition", which was published by Academics for Peace. Many of the academics have since been dismissed, suspended or forced to resign, and all of them continue to be subjected to administrative and judicial investigations (see A/HRC/33/32, para. 10, TUR 3/2016).

26. Turkmenistan

59. On 15 July 2016, the Human Rights Committee raised allegations of intimidation and reprisals concerning Navruz Tahirovich Nasrylayev (CCPR/C/117/D/2219/2012), who claimed in a submission of 3 September 2012 that the State party, Turkmenistan, had violated his rights under articles 7, 14(7) and 18(1) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights through his repeated prosecution, conviction and imprisonment as a conscientious objector. The Committee noted with concern that, subsequent to Mr. Nasrylayev's submission of a communication thereon, and according to the information provided by Mr. Nasrylayev himself, on 24 January 2013 his family home was raided by the police, and family members and guests had been subjected to mistreatment. The Committee also noted that the State party had not provided any information to the contrary following the call from the Rapporteur on new communications and interim measures, dated 8 February 2013, to abstain from acts of pressure, intimidation or reprisal against the author of the communication and his relatives. The Committee also recalled that any act of pressure, intimidation or reprisal against a person who had submitted a communication or his or her relatives constituted a breach of the State party's obligations under the Optional Protocol to cooperate with the Committee in good faith in the implementation of the provisions of the Covenant.

27. United Arab Emirates

60. On 27 March 2017, six special procedure mandate holders raised its concerns with the Government of the United Arab Emirates with regard to allegations of the arrest, secret detention and risk of enforced disappearance of Ahmed Mansoor, a prominent human rights defender and blogger, as intimidation and act of reprisal for his collaboration with the Human Rights Council, the special procedures, the universal periodic review mechanism and the treaty bodies (see A/HRC/36/25, para. 13, ARE 1/2017). Several mandate holders have issued a press release on this case.⁸

⁸ See OHCHR, "UN rights experts urge UAE: "Immediately release human rights defender Ahmed Mansoor", press release, 28 March 2017.

28. Uzbekistan

61. On 1 March 2017, Elena Urlaeva, head of the Human Rights Defenders Alliance of Uzbekistan, was allegedly arrested in Tashkent and taken to a police station, reportedly the day before her planned meeting with representatives of the International Labour Organization and the World Bank. At the police station, Ms. Urlaeva was insulted and mocked by police officers, who told her that she needed psychiatric treatment. She was then forcibly transferred to a psychiatric facility in Tashkent. On 24 March, Ms. Urlaeva was released after 24 days of psychiatric detention. On 5 April, four mandate holders expressed their concern regarding these incidents, which appear to be related to Ms. Urlaeva's cooperation with international organizations (see A/HRC/36/25, para. 13, UZB 1/2017).

29. Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

62. In the previous report of the Secretary-General (A/HRC/33/19), reference was made to the concerns expressed by independent experts with regard to allegations of a pattern of discrediting and intimidating human rights defenders in reprisal for their cooperation with the United Nations and regional bodies on human rights (paras. 32-37). In a press briefing held on 19 May 2017, a spokesperson of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights referred to the case of Henrique Capriles, who was scheduled to meet the High Commissioner in New York, on the same day, but was prevented from leaving Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to do so. The High Commissioner expressed his hope that the incident was not a reprisal linked to the planned meeting with him. The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights addressed cases of reprisals with the Government in April 2017.

30. Multiple

63. On 21 October 2016, the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture addressed a letter to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights with regard to its concerns about the increasing number of instances in which State authorities resort to freezing the bank assets of human rights organizations working for victims of torture in order to impede external funding, including from the Voluntary Fund. On 1 November 2016, the High Commissioner expressed in his response concern about the feedback provided on situations of reprisals against a number of the Fund's grantees, and stated that he would share these observations with the Assistant Secretary-General.

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

64. **As demonstrated by the number of allegations contained in the present report, acts of intimidation and reprisal against those seeking to cooperate or having cooperated with the United Nations on human rights continue and are of grave concern. While non-State actors are also responsible for acts of reprisal, the majority of cases described in the report demonstrate that these acts are often perpetrated by State officials or at the very least are condoned by the State.**

65. **The range of intimidation and reprisals has also become broader over the past year, and the means used increasingly blunt. Authorities in a number of States resort to travel bans, often without judicial process or unannounced, to prevent individuals and groups, including human rights defenders and civil society organizations, from travelling to meetings of United Nations human rights bodies and mechanisms. Other States freeze the bank assets of human rights defenders who receive funding from United Nations human rights bodies or who report violations to them. Information has been brought to my attention about legislation aimed at penalizing organizations for contacting human rights mechanisms. As in previous years, people engaging with the United Nations have been subjected to, inter alia, intimidation, harassment, threats both online and offline, derogatory media campaigns, travel bans, arbitrary arrest and detention, enforced disappearance, torture and ill-treatment, disbarment and dismissal from their posts, for attempting to engage with the United Nations on human rights.**

66. Beyond the grave impact on the life of the persons concerned and their relatives, intimidation and reprisals also systematically undermine United Nations action on human rights and the confidence of partners in the Organization. I also regret that a number of concerns relating to acts of intimidation and reprisal did not receive a reply from the Governments concerned during the period under review. In other instances, Governments provided responses to the allegations but failed to address the concerns raised.

67. Patterns emerging from the cases in the present and previous reports seem to reflect a strategy by some States to prevent the activities of individuals from providing information or otherwise cooperating with the United Nations on human rights.

68. Like previous Secretaries-General, I stress that any act of intimidation or reprisal against individuals or groups seeking to cooperate or having cooperated with the United Nations in the field of human rights, or against their family members, legal representatives or others with professional or personal ties to such individuals or groups, is absolutely unacceptable. Such acts run counter to the very principles of the United Nations, and are a violation of human rights. I reiterate that States must end these acts, investigate all allegations, provide effective remedies and adopt and implement preventative measures to prevent their recurrence.

69. The United Nations has a collective responsibility to take action to respond to and prevent these acts. This responsibility is part of our Charter-based duty to promote and encourage respect for human rights - not only a normative duty, but an operational imperative for ensuring respect for human rights, sustainable development and building secure and peaceful societies.

70. The designation of the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights as the senior official to lead United Nations action in this regard was intended as a response to this collective responsibility. I therefore call upon all States, United Nations entities, bodies and mechanisms, civil society representatives and human rights defenders to cooperate fully with him. Another key objective of this designation was also to strengthen the collection of information on acts of intimidation or reprisal by encouraging all parts of the United Nations system to more regularly share information on such cases and to take appropriate measures. I encourage all stakeholders to report allegations of intimidation and reprisals for cooperating with the United Nations on human rights as they occur to ensure follow-up and action.

71. The Human Rights Council and its Presidency, the special procedures, the treaty bodies and the High Commissioner are important actors in addressing this issue. I call upon them to continue to address all cases of intimidation or acts of reprisal brought to their attention in relation to their mandates, and to coordinate their action with the designated senior official, as appropriate.

72. I call upon all States to follow up on the cases included in the present and previous reports, and to provide substantive responses where they remain outstanding. In this context, I also recommend that the Human Rights Council devote sufficient time to the discussion of the present report and to interact with the senior official designated. I also invite the President of the Council to give an oral update to the Council on the cases brought to his or her attention at each session.

Annex I

Comprehensive information on alleged cases of intimidation or reprisal for cooperation with the United Nations on human rights

1. Algeria

1. On 31 March 2017, some mandate holders raised concerns with the Government over allegations of reprisals against Rafik Belamrania, founding member of Association pour les enfants des disparus forcés en Algérie – Mish'al, for publishing on Facebook on 14 February 2017 a decision made by the Human Rights Committee, regarding the summary execution of his father in 1995 (see A/HRC/36/25, para. 13, DZA 2/2017).

2. On 20 February 2017, Mr. Belamrania was summoned to and interrogated at the police station in Jijel. On 21 February 2017, he was charged with “apology of terrorism on Facebook,” under article 87 of the Penal Code and detained the following day. In its response to mandate holders dated 29 May 2017, the Government stated that on 28 November 2016 the judicial police was informed that a citizen publicly expressed his support for people accused of “apology of terrorism” and it was established that the person in question was Mr. Belamrania. The Government informed that Mr. Belamrania circulated photos and expressed his support for terrorist organizations, including Daesh. The Government further informed that Mr. Belamrania was arrested on 20 February 2017, and on 22 February 2017 he was placed under custody, and stressed that Mr. Belamrania was provided with all legal guarantees during this process. The Government’s reply did not address the allegations relating to possible reprisals.

3. On 8 March 2017, the rapporteurs designated to follow up on findings on reprisals of the Human Rights Committee sent a letter to the Government of Algeria, requesting clarifications on the situation of Mr. Belamrania. The Government responded on 18 July 2017 that the allegations of arbitrary detention of Mr. Belamrania were unfounded as he benefited from all guarantees during the process and that his custody did not go over the maximum time allowed in the penal code. The Government further stated that the arrest of Mr. Belamrania had nothing to do with the situation of his father.

2. Bahrain

4. In the light of an ongoing trend of major harassment and intimidation against human rights defenders, the imposition of travel bans on selected individuals, the arrest, detention, and ill-treatment of targeted individuals and one particular case involving sexual assault and torture as a form of reprisal, allegations were addressed by special procedure mandate holders and the President of the Human Rights Council who were in contact with the Government on these cases. The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights addressed allegations on cases in writing to the Government. Special procedures have expressed concerns about an orchestrated crackdown on civil society, stressing that the authorities have resorted to drastic measures to curb dissenting opinions, including reprisals for cooperating with the United Nations, and in particular OHCHR (see A/HRC/34/75, para. 10 BHR 4/2016 and BHR 7/2016).

5. Several allegations were received by special procedures about travel bans allegedly imposed on human rights defenders for their cooperation with the Human Rights Council, in particular the defenders’ participation in the thirty-second and thirty-third sessions of the Council, the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, or human rights workshops. On 25 November 2016, three mandate holders raised concerns about allegations of a travel ban imposed on civil society representatives Mohammed Jawad, Ms. Nedal Al-Salman, Hussain Salam Ahmed Radhi, Mohammed Al-Tajer and Enas Oun in this regard (see A/HRC/34/75, BHR

7/2016). At the time of the finalization of the present report, no response had been received from the Government.

6. On 21 June 2016, the Spokesperson of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed deep concern that Nabeel Rajab, a co-founder of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, was arrested on 13 June 2016 for “spreading false news and rumours about the internal situation in a bid to discredit Bahrain”. He had been subject to a travel ban since at least January 2015. There is concern on the part of the High Commissioner for Human Rights that these and subsequent actions against Mr. Rajab are connected to his engagement with the Human Rights Council.

7. On 8 July 2016, some mandate holders raised concerns regarding allegations of a travel ban imposed on members of civil society, Hussain Salam Ahmed Radhi, Ebtesam Abdulhusain Ali-Alsoaigh, Ebrahim Al-Demistani and Abdalnabi Al-Ekry in an act of reprisal for their cooperation with the United Nations Human Rights Council, in particular their participation in the 32nd session of the Human Rights Council, and their human rights work (see A/HRC/34/75, BHR 4/2016).

8. In its replies dated 15 August 2016 and 9 September 2016, the Government informed that the travel ban was imposed pursuant to a decision by the Public Prosecutor’s Office, based on the provisions of article 159 of the Code of Criminal Procedure which authorizes the imposition of a travel ban on an accused person if it is considered that such action is in the interest of the investigation. The Government’s response did not address the allegations of possible reprisals.

9. It is alleged that travel bans have been repeatedly imposed in what appears to be a politically motivated strategy to prevent human rights defenders from travelling abroad and participating in international events related to human rights, in particular those organized by the United Nations. On 23 August 2016, the President of the Council, in a meeting of the Bureau “recalled the alleged case of reprisals relating to travel bans faced by eight individuals who were allegedly prevented from traveling from Bahrain to Geneva to participate in the 32nd session of the Council, as discussed at the Bureau meetings of 23 and 29 June 2016, and informed of the lack of appropriate action or adequate explanatory information from the concerned State.” The President expressed concern over this case and noted that he will consider very carefully all cases of reprisals brought to his attention.

10. On 16 June 2017, special procedure mandates publicly urged the Government to halt its orchestrated crackdown on civil society, stressing that the authorities have resorted to drastic measures to curb dissenting opinions such as torture, arbitrary detention, unfounded convictions, the stripping of citizenship, the use of travel bans, intimidation, including death threats, and reprisals for cooperating with international organizations, including the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.^a

3. Burundi

11. In December 2015, the Committee against Torture requested a special report from Burundi, in light of the deterioration of the human rights situation in Burundi since April 2015. The consideration of the special report on Burundi was scheduled for the fifty-eighth session of the Committee on 28 and 29 July 2016. In this context, the Committee received reports from non-governmental organizations, in particular a coalition report from several Burundian non-governmental organizations, which was made public and posted on the Committee’s webpage. Some of these NGOs also sent participants to the session held in July 2016 in Geneva, including three lawyers: Armel Niyongere (representing ACAT/Campagne SOS-Torture), Dieudonné Bashirahishize (representing “Collectif des Avocats”) and Lambert Nigarura (representing ACAT Burundi/ CB-CPI).

12. A delegation from the Government of Burundi participated in the session in Geneva and briefed the Committee. During her introductory speech to the Committee on 28 July 2016, the Minister of Justice of Burundi referred to information that, in her view, had been

^a OHCHR, “Bahrain must end worsening human rights clampdown, UN experts say,” 16 June 2017.

obtained from anonymous sources that were impossible to verify, or information provided by “opposition politicians.” On the second day of the dialogue on 29 July 2016, the Government of Burundi suspended its participation and the delegation was absent. Immediately after the interruption of the dialogue, the Committee was informed of a letter from the Attorney General of Bujumbura, dated 29 July 2016, requesting that the Bujumbura Bar Association disbar four lawyers, three of whom had participated in the briefings with the Committee and were present during the first day of the dialogue (Armel Niyongere, Dieudonné Bashirahishize and Lambert Nigarura) and one who was a signatory of the coalition report sent by the NGOs, Vital Nshimirimana.

13. On 5 August 2016, the Committee’s rapporteur on reprisals sent a letter to the Government, expressing concern that the Attorney General’s request related to the cooperation of these members of civil society with the Committee and mentioned its concerns over reprisals in its concluding observations from the session (see CAT/C/BDI/CO/2/Add.1, para. 33-34). On 11 August 2016, the Government responded to the Committee’s letter, indicating that the request of disbarment had been made in the course of legal proceedings against three of these lawyers. The lawyers concerned were charged with “participation in an insurrectional movement, attempted coup d’état, trafficking of images and, in the case of one of the lawyers, because he regularly violated the laws and regulations by his statements and pronouncements,” without giving further information.

14. On 12 August 2016, the Committee replied that the request for disbarment was pre-empting the outcome of an ongoing criminal case, which had not led to a finding of guilt, and requested further information. On 29 September 2016, the Bar Association of Burundi declared, while proceedings were pending before the Bujumbura Court of Appeal, that the request for disbarment by the Attorney General was unfounded. However, on 16 January 2017, the Bujumbura Court of Appeal decided to disbar Armel Niyongere, Dieudonné Bashirahishize and Vital Nshimirimana, and to suspend Lambert Nigarura for a period of one year, although he was not under criminal investigation.

15. In a letter dated 21 February 2017, the Committee indicated that the disbarment of the lawyers before the conclusion of the pending criminal procedures against them was pre-empting the outcome and seemed to reinforce the hypothesis that disbarment was a measure of reprisal for the active participation of these lawyers during the Committee’s examination of the State party’s report. At the time of finalization of the present report, no further response had been received from the Government.

16. The experts conducting the independent investigation on Burundi pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution S-24/1, in their report (A/HRC/33/37) also raised concerns regarding the threat of reprisals for those individuals who cooperated or who wished to cooperate with the investigation. The experts noted that “UNIIB faced several challenges, including the fact that two of its four planned visits could not be carried out”. They further noted that “some victims and witnesses feared reprisals.” In their recommendations, they also stressed that “the Government should immediately cease its reprisals and threats against individuals who have cooperated with the investigation, and other human rights mechanisms and organizations”.

17. On 14 June 2017, the chair of the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi briefed the Human Rights Council and stated that the Commission received information from a large number of exiled Burundians who were afraid to provide testimonies for fear of reprisals. In the briefing, she noted that, similarly, human rights defenders who still operate in the country find it hard to gather testimony from victims inside the country for fear of exposing themselves and the victims to the risk of reprisals.

^b OHCHR, Oral briefing by Chair of Commission of Inquiry on Burundi, 14 June 2017.

18. In March 2017 the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights informed the Peacebuilding Commission and members of the Security Council about allegations of reprisals against persons who had cooperated or sought to cooperate with the United Nations, including with OHCHR in Bujumbura.

4. China

19. In the course of 2016, several allegations of reprisals against individuals in relation to meetings with the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights during his visit to People's Republic of China in August 2016 were received by special procedure mandate holders who took action and have been in contact with the Government (see A/HRC/34/75, para. 10 CHN 9/2016 and CHN 13/2016).

20. On 26 October 2016, some mandate holders raised concerns over the alleged arbitrary arrest and detention of Li Wenzu, as well as alleged acts of intimidation and harassment against her and Wang Qiaoling in reprisal for their cooperation with the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights during his visit in August 2016 (see A/HRC/34/75, CHN 9/2016). Ms. Li and Ms. Wang are married to two human rights lawyers, Li Heping and Wang Quanzhang, respectively. Both men were arrested on 10 July 2015 by police during the "709" incidents concerning human rights lawyers, legal assistants and law firm staff, and activists across the country, named for the date on which it took place (9 July 2015) and addressed in a prior communication by special procedure mandate holders (see CHN 6/2015).

21. On 16 August 2016, Ms. Li and Ms. Wang planned to meet with the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights at the United Nations office in Beijing. When she left home, Ms. Li noticed that three individuals, allegedly *guobao* (domestic security) officers were following her, and later physically prevented her from entering the United Nations building. As a result, Ms. Li was unable to meet with the Special Rapporteur. Since this incident, Ms. Li has reportedly been subject to various forms of surveillance and harassment by the domestic security forces. In its reply dated 19 December 2016, the Government stated that it understood that the freedom of movement of neither Ms. Li nor Ms. Wang had been restricted and that neither Ms. Li nor Ms. Wang had been subject to unlawful surveillance or harassment.

22. On 2 December 2016, some mandate holders raised their concerns regarding the disappearance of Jiang Tianyong, a prominent human rights lawyer (See A/HRC/34/75, CHN 13/2016). On 17 November 2016, Mr. Jiang travelled to Changsha, Hunan Province, to visit the wife of a human rights lawyer who had been arrested in the "709" incidents and who currently remains in detention at the Changsha Detention Centre. On 21 November, Mr. Jiang sent a message to a friend informing that he was boarding the train back to Beijing. Since this communication, he has gone missing. In their letter, the experts stated that given Mr. Jiang's meeting with the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights in Beijing in August 2016, they are also concerned that his disappearance may have occurred, at least in part, in reprisal for his cooperation with the Special Rapporteur.

23. On 28 December 2016, some mandate holders raised new information on allegations about Mr. Jiang with the Government. On 20 January 2017, the Government responded, stating that the *Gong'an* (law enforcement authority) has lawfully taken compulsory criminal measures against Mr. Jiang for fraudulently using the identification documents of others and on suspicion of illegal possession of national confidential documents and espionage. The Government's reply did not address the allegations relating to reprisals.

24. On 7 June 2017, in his statement to the Human Rights Council, the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights made a special plea to the Government to release Mr. Jiang. During the interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur, the Government noted that the Special Rapporteur had criticized several cases of detention of criminals which went beyond his mandate and infringed on the sovereignty of China. The Government said it would not tolerate that the protection of human rights be used to support activities that go against public order.

25. On 26 April 2017, a Uyghur human rights activist and member of the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization, Dolkun Isa, who was attending the annual Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples at United Nations Headquarters in New York, was escorted from the premises pending further examination following the receipt of information from representatives of China alleging “security reasons”. As a result, Mr. Isa could not resume his participation in the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples.

5. Cuba

26. On 18 October 2016, some mandate holders raised with the Government allegations of harassment and reprisals against human rights defenders and members of the Cubalex Legal Information Center for their cooperation with the United Nations in the field of human rights (see A/HRC/34/75, para. 10 CUB 3/2016). The allegations were mainly in relation to the cooperation of the advocates with the Human Rights Council, its special procedures and the universal periodic review mechanism, who were stopped and questioned at the airport and harassed by immigration agents.

27. According to the allegations, between March and August 2016, the civil society members were stopped and questioned at the airport travelling to, or arriving back from human rights related activities. They experienced targeted harassment by immigration agents, including extensive scrutiny of travel documents, confiscation of electronic resources and documents, and interrogation about their activities. Additionally, on 23 September 2016, Cubalex Legal Information Center’s offices were raided by State authorities from four different judicial entities during a thirteen-hour operation in which the premises were searched, all electronic equipment was confiscated, and some of the staff members were subjected to body cavity searches and humiliating and degrading treatment (see CUB 3/2016).

28. On 14 December 2016, the Government responded stating that the persons mentioned do not qualify as human rights defenders under the provisions of the United Nations Declaration on human rights defenders; Cubalex receives financial support from the United States of America and carries out anti-Cuban activities; and the persons in question did not avail themselves of any existing complaint mechanisms in the country about the events described.

6. Egypt

29. Allegations of reprisals in the form of travel bans against human rights defenders attempting to participate in human rights meetings were acted upon by special procedure mandate holders (see A/HRC/34/75, para. 10 EGY 15/2016, press release of 24 November 2016c). Some of these allegations were related to participation in the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and in training on gender equality and women’s rights.

30. On 22 November 2016, some special procedure mandate holders expressed concerns with the Government about a travel ban issued against two human rights defenders, Azza Soliman and Ahmed Ragheb (see A/HRC/34/75, EGY 15/2016, press release of 24 November 2016). On 19 November 2016, and based on a judicial order issued on 17 November 2016, at the Cairo International Airport, Ms. Soliman was prevented from travelling to Jordan in order to participate in training on gender equality and women’s rights. Ms. Soliman was not formally informed of the order or of the basis for the travel ban.

31. On 15 November 2016, Mr. Ragheb was prevented by passport control officials at Cairo International Airport from travelling to Morocco in order to attend the twenty-second Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. He was informed that the travel restriction was based on a judicial order issued against him in May 2016 by an investigative judge. At the time of the finalization of the present report,

^c OHCHR, “Egypt steps up travel bans on rights defenders with “chilling effect”, 24 November 2016.

no response had been received from the Government to the concerns raised by the mandate holders.

32. Allegations of reprisals against civil society members in the form of asset freezes were raised by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders (see A/HRC/32/52/Add.1, para. 662). Staff members of the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS) and members of their families are alleged to have been targeted for their cooperation with United Nations mechanisms, and due to meetings with United Nations representatives.

33. On 22 November 2016, three mandate holders raised concerns with the Government about draft legislation on non-governmental organizations, including a provision restricting cooperation with foreign organizations without prior authorization (see A/HRC/34/75, para. 10, EGY 14/2016). The experts were concerned that the draft legislation would impose severe restrictions on civil society organizations and would impinge on the exercise of the rights to freedom of expression and freedom of association. At the time of the finalization of the present report, no response had been received from the Government. In April 2017, the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights addressed concerns about the implications of the proposed legislation and raised individual cases with the Government.

34. On 3 May 2017, four mandate holders expressed concerns about the abduction, detention, torture and ill-treatment of Dr. Ahmed Shawky Abdelsattar Mohamed Amasha, reportedly in retaliation for his activities as a human rights defender, which included documenting cases of enforced disappearances for special procedures (see A/HRC/36/25, para. 13, EGY 5/2017). On 10 March 2017, Dr. Amasha was allegedly abducted by police officers in Cairo. No information was given about his whereabouts until 1 April 2017. He was charged on 13 April 2017 with “belonging to a banned group” under the Anti-Terrorism Law of Egypt and transferred to the Tora prison of Cairo. It was alleged that following his abduction on 10 March 2017, he was secretly detained at the Central Police station of Abbasiya in the Cairo Governorate. Dr. Amasha was allegedly subjected to torture and ill-treatment during his secret detention. On 27 April 2017, his detention was prolonged. The mandates involved expressed serious concerns that the acts committed against Dr. Amasha seem to constitute acts of reprisals against him for documenting cases of enforced disappearances for special procedures. At the time of the finalization of the present report, no response had been received from the Government.

7. Eritrea

35. In its final report to the Human Rights Council in June 2016, the commission of inquiry on human rights in Eritrea highlighted that the protection of witnesses and victims’ continued to be a central concern during the Commission’s mandate and that “almost all victims and witnesses who spoke with the Commission feared reprisals by Eritrean authorities, either against themselves or their family members in Eritrea” (A/HRC/32/47, para. 8).

36. In this context, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea reiterated in her statement to the General Assembly in October 2016 her commitment to address reprisals against those who had cooperated with the Commission or with her mandate and to ensure that appropriate follow-up was conducted by relevant mechanisms. In its resolution 35/35, the Human Rights Council encouraged States in which witnesses reside to protect those who have cooperated with the commission of inquiry and the Special Rapporteur from reprisals. In its statements to the Human Rights Council in June 2016 and June 2017 and in a press release about the Human Rights Council resolution in June 2016, the Government criticized the mandates and work of the above-mentioned mechanisms but did not address the allegations of reprisals.

8. Honduras

37. On 22 September 2015, the email accounts of Asociación para una Ciudadanía Participativa, a non-governmental organization, were reportedly hacked. On 2 March 2017,

Hedme Castro, the general coordinator of the association, was briefly held at Tegucigalpa airport where she was preparing to board a flight to Geneva to participate in the thirty-fourth session of the Human Rights Council. Ms. Castro was reportedly questioned about her activities scheduled in Geneva and the human rights-related complaints she intended to make. Ms. Castro was also reportedly subjected to further acts of intimidation, in April and May, when the tyres on her car were slashed and when she was assaulted during a demonstration against a mining company. Special procedures took action in response to these allegations and have been in contact with the Government. The Assistant Secretary-General has also addressed cases with the Government.

38. On 29 June 2017 the Government responded that, according to the Ministry of Internal Security, no requests for specific protection measures had been received from Ms. Castro. The prosecutor's office and the national commissioner both opened an investigation into the questioning and holding of Ms. Castro at the airport, but have not been able to contact her.

9. India

39. Allegations were received about intimidation and reprisals against Khurram Parvez in relation to his cooperation with the Human Rights Council, the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances and the universal periodic review mechanism. These reprisals allegedly took the form of a travel ban and arbitrary arrest and detention. Special procedures took action on these allegations and have been in contact with the Government in that regard (A/HRC/34/75, para. 10, IND 7/2016 and IND 9/2016).

40. On 14 September 2016, Mr. Parvez went to the Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi to travel to Geneva to attend the thirty-third session of the Human Rights Council in which the Working group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances was presenting its report. He was also planning to hold an event on the human rights situation in Jammu and Kashmir. Mr. Parvez was reportedly stopped at the airport, held for two hours, and informed that he would not be allowed to travel. On 15 September 2016, the police took him to the Kothi Bhag police station and detained him. On 16 September 2016, two special procedure mandates expressed their concerns about allegations of arbitrary arrest, detention, intimidation and a travel ban issued against Mr. Parvez in alleged reprisal for cooperating with human rights mechanisms, in particular, concerning the documentation and litigation of human rights violations in Jammu and Kashmir and the submission of communications and urgent appeals to the special procedures on behalf of victims of human rights violations as well as the recent submission provided by his organization to the United Nations for the upcoming universal periodic review (A/HRC/34/75, IND 7/2016).

41. In its response dated 29 September 2016, the Government disputed that Mr. Parvez was a human rights defender, and stated that he has been working against the interests of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, has been involved in anti-India activities and has incited youth to violence. The Government further stated that Mr. Parvez had been in touch with secessionist leaders and has incited individuals to violent protests in the aftermath of the July 2016 unrest.

42. In a letter dated 11 October 2016, mandate holders reiterated their continuing preoccupations and expressed concern at the very broad and vague nature of the accusations contained in the Government's reply (A/HRC/34/75, IND 9/2016). They were also concerned at the implication that Mr. Parvez was not a human rights defender or that he would pretend to be one, despite his longstanding and positive engagement with the United Nations human rights mechanisms. At the time of the finalization of the present report, no further response had been received from the Government.

10. Iran (Islamic Republic of)

43. In presenting the report of the Secretary-General on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran (A/HRC/34/40), the Deputy United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights stressed that reprisals against individuals cooperating or having established contact with United Nations human rights mechanisms had been reported. In the report, it

was stressed that allegations of reprisals remained a cause of great concern and referred in particular to a press statement issued by special procedure mandate holders in November 2016 in which they urged the Government to end its harassment of Raheleh Rahemipor. The mandate holders referred in particular to the fact that Ms. Rahemipor was the sister of Hossein Rahemipor, whose case was under review by the Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances and to the continued harassment of Ms. Rahemipor, including the incidents during which she was questioned repeatedly in August 2016 by the relevant authorities about the complaint sent to the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (see A/HRC/34/75, para. 10, IRN 23/2016 and IRN 29/2016; and A/HRC/35/44, para. 12, IRN 3/2017).

44. In June 2016, the Working Group had reviewed the case of the alleged enforced disappearance of Mr. Rahemipor and transmitted it to the Government. It was reported that following the transmission of the case of Mr. Rahemipor to the Government by the Working Group, Ms. Rahemipor was contacted several times by phone at which time she was instructed to turn herself in. She was charged with a range of national security offences, including “propaganda against the regime,” “participation in unlawful assemblies,” and “membership of Rah-e Kargar.” At the time of the finalization of the present report, no response had been received from the Government to any of the three communications.

11. Israel

45. In his report submitted to the Human Rights Council at its thirty-fourth session (A/HRC/34/70), the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 highlighted an increasingly virulent environment for human rights defenders working on issues related to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including those addressing issues in United Nations forums. He reported that following a statement made in October 2016 to the Security Council, the Director-General of B’Tselem, Hagai El-Ad, together with Lara Friedman of Americans for Peace Now, was publicly condemned by high-level Israeli officials. One Member of Parliament called for the revocation of his citizenship. Mr. El-Ad had warned of the expansion of settlements and the deteriorating situation of human rights for Palestinians.

46. The above-mentioned report followed a joint press statement issued on 16 December 2016 by the Special Rapporteur and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, in which they expressed their concern for human rights activists working in the Occupied Palestinian Territory who had been subject to “harassment and threats while seeking to promote accountability and engage with the International Criminal Court.”^d Nada Kiswanson, a human rights lawyer in The Hague, where she represents Al-Haq, an organization that documents violations of Palestinians’ rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory regardless of the identity of the perpetrator, is alleged to have been subjected to death threats and accusations linked to her work before the International Criminal Court (see A/HRC/34/70, para 44).

12. Mauritania

47. On 11 October 2016, seven special procedure mandate holders expressed their concern about grave violations in Mauritania of the judicial process, including allegations of torture, following the arrest, arbitrary detention and sentencing to prison of 13 members of Initiative pour la résurgence de la mouvement abolitionniste (IRA). The mandate holders also expressed their concern about the possible link between those acts and the members having cooperated with the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights during his visit to the country in May 2016 (A/HRC/34/75, para. 10, MRT 2/2016).

48. The members of IRA were arrested between June and July 2016, and were accused of armed gathering, use of violence towards law enforcement agents, insurrection and membership in a non-recognized organization. Following trials, which violated fair trial and

^d OHCHR, “Human rights defenders under growing legal pressure in the OPT,” 16 December 2016.

due process guarantees due to a number of irregularities, the activists were sentenced in August 2016 to imprisonment, ranging from three to fifteen years. The communication sent to the Government expressed concern that the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights indicated that the authorities had possibly targeted IRA activists as reprisal for their cooperation with the visit of the Special Rapporteur. Another communication sent by mandate holders on 19 October 2016 further addressed the situation of IRA members, recalling that the Special Rapporteur had met IRA members during his visit. In a letter dated 19 October 2016, the Government responded by denying allegations of torture, and stating that the judicial process scrupulously respected international human rights standards. The Government's reply did not address the allegations of reprisals.

13. Mexico

49. On 4 August 2015, the Committee against Torture, in *Ramirez et al. v. Mexico*, found a violation of articles 1, 2 (1), 12-15 and 22 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (see CAT/C/55/D/500/2012 and communication No. 500/2012). On 19 May and 19 September 2016, the complainants submitted that they had suffered acts of intimidation and harassment by the authorities as a result of the Committee's decision.

50. The complainants noted that the State party had undertaken a campaign aimed at stigmatizing them as criminals and re-victimising them. According to reports, a few days after the release of the Committee's decision, the Delegate of the Attorney General's Office for the Baja California province declared before the media that torture allegations were a "common strategy used by lawyers defending criminals in order to obtain their release or suspend the proceedings against them". According to information received, several printed media published articles referring to the complainants as "kidnappers released by the United Nations." Television programs stigmatized the NGO that represented the complainants before the Committee, stating that the Committee had enabled an organised criminal network supporting kidnappers.

51. Despite having been acquitted in the criminal case against them, two of the complainants were detained again a few hours after having been released based on an alleged arrest warrant dating from 2009 and without a judicial decision. As at 31 July 2017 they were being held in the punishment cells of a penitentiary centre together with convicted detainees, and have been subjected to ill-treatment. Following the release of the other two complainants, the two complainants who remained in detention have been repeatedly harassed by the police, subjected to random arrests and interrogations and called "kidnappers". Their family members have also been harassed by the police. One of the complainants has had his workplace searched on several occasions and without a warrant.

52. In September 2016, the complainants' submission was transmitted to the State party for observations. The rapporteurs on reprisals and on follow-up requested that the State party adopt all measures necessary to protect the security and integrity of the complainants, their family members and representatives, and inform the Committee accordingly. No response was received from the Government, and the Committee sent a reminder at its 59th session (see CAT/C/59/3).

14. Morocco

53. On 3 August 2016, the Committee against Torture, in *Abdul Rahman Alhaj Ali v. Morocco*, found that the extradition of Abdul Rahman Alhaj Ali would constitute a breach of article 3 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (see CAT C/58/D/682/2015 and communication No. 682/2015). Mr. Abdul Rahman Alhaj Ali, a Syrian national registered with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and seeking asylum in Morocco, was detained in October 2014 in Morocco on an extradition request by Saudi Arabia for "breach of trust" based on previous business relations in Riyadh. The Committee urged the Government to release him or to try him if charges are brought against him in Morocco, as he had been in extradition detention

for almost two years, far in excess of the 60-day pretrial period provided for in Morocco. According to information received by the Committee, the prolongation of his detention was reportedly related to the complaint made to the Committee on his behalf on 22 May 2015. On 10 March 2017, in the light of the gravity of the complainant's allegations, the Committee's rapporteurs on reprisals and follow-up requested the State party urgently to provide the Committee with the necessary clarifications on the situation of the complainant by 31 March 2017.

54. On 8 March 2017, Mr. Abdul Rahman Alhaj Ali informed the Committee that, while he was on a hunger-strike to protest against his detention for almost three years, he was advised by officials that he was not going to be released from detention in Morocco, and that he should rather accept to be extradited to Saudi Arabia. He therefore signed an extradition agreement under duress, which he subsequently requested to withdraw. On 10 March 2017, the Committee's rapporteurs on reprisals and follow-up requested the Government to urgently provide the necessary clarifications on the situation of Mr. Abdul Rahman Alhaj Ali. In the absence of a response, the Chairperson of the Committee met with the Government on 11 May 2017. On 22 May 2017, the Government responded that the complainant is being regularly visited, due to the absence of his family in Morocco, by NGOs and the delegation of UNHCR, that his rights as a detainee have been respected, and that he had ended his hunger strike. The Government further informed that the judicial authority has accepted that Mr. Ali had withdrawn his request for extradition allegedly signed under threat. Mr. Abdul Rahman Alhaj Ali still remains in detention.

15. Myanmar

55. Special procedure mandate holders received allegations of intimidation and reprisals against individuals who have engaged with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar during her visits to the country. They have been in contact with the Government on the matter (see A/HRC/34/75, para. 10, MMR 2/2016). For example, it is alleged that the arrest and detention of Khine Myo Htun, a political and environmental activist, is linked to his cooperation with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, with whom he met during her visit in June 2016, shortly before he was detained. Mr. Htun, an official of the Arakan Liberation Party, had issued a written statement criticizing the impact of State military action on civilians in Rakhine State in the ongoing conflict in that region.

56. Khine Myo Htun reportedly submitted to the authorities evidence substantiating his allegations. On 5 May 2016 charges were filed against him for defamation and incitement under the Myanmar Penal Code. On 22 June 2016, he met with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar during her visit to the country. On 26 August 2016, four mandate holders raised concerns regarding the alleged arbitrary detention and criminal prosecution of Mr. Htun (see A/HRC/34/75, MMR 2/2016), also expressing concern that the arrest and detention of Mr. Htun may carry an element of reprisal for his cooperation with the United Nations on human rights, as these actions took place after he had met with the Special Rapporteur.

57. On 6 October 2016, the Government responded to the allegations of reprisals against Mr. Htun, stating that on 5 May 2016 a case was filed against him for publishing a statement with the intent to mislead the public, defame the Tatmyadaw, or Myanmar Armed Forces, and intimidate the public by using false information. In its reply the Government did not address the allegations relating to reprisals.

58. On 24 January 2017, the Special Rapporteur issued a press release,^e expressing her deep concerns about reported reprisals against some of those with whom she met. She drew attention to her alarm that security forces, after a brief lull in activity, had resumed military counter operations in villages nearby to those she had visited in June 2016, with allegations of arbitrary detention and arrest in relation to these raids. The Special Rapporteur further

^e OHCHR, "UN human rights expert concerned about reprisals during recent visit to Myanmar," 24 January 2017.

addressed acts of intimidation and reprisals related to her visit in her end of mission statement of 21 July 2016.^f She renewed her request to all civil society actors, media workers and prisoners with whom she met to report to her any cases of reprisals. She also reiterated that the Government must ensure the safety of all her interlocutors and guarantee that they will not face any reprisals, including threats, harassment, punishment or judicial proceedings. The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights addressed the allegations with the Government in June 2017.

59. In its resolution 34/22, the Human Rights Council emphasized that no one should face reprisals, monitoring, surveillance, threats, harassment or intimidation for cooperating or speaking with special procedures, including the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, the international independent fact-finding mission or the United Nations, and called upon the Government to take appropriate measures to prevent such acts and to combat impunity by investigating promptly and effectively all allegations of intimidation and reprisal in order to bring perpetrators to justice and to provide victims with appropriate remedies.

16. Oman

60. On 27 June 2016, five special procedure mandate holders expressed concerns about the alleged arbitrary arrest and detention of Said Ali Said Jadad, a human rights defender, journalist and blogger, for his human rights activities and the alleged continued reprisals for his cooperation with the Special Rapporteur on the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association during his visit to Oman in September 2014, as well as for his cooperation with international organizations (see A/HRC/34/75, para. 10, OMN 1/2016).

61. On 21 January 2015, Mr. Jadad was arrested in Salalah, reportedly in response to his critical writing. He was convicted on 8 March 2015, for “undermining the prestige of the State,” for “inciting the public to join an illegal gathering” and for “publicizing material that disturbs the public order.” He was released in April 2015, pending appeal, rearrested again on 18 November 2015, and later released. In a letter dated 2 September 2016, the Government of Oman responded to the concerns raised and informed the mandate holders that as a result of their appeal, Mr. Jadad’s case had been re-examined and that he had been released from detention on 26 August 2016.

17. Pakistan

62. On 18 April 2017, the National Commission for Human Rights of Pakistan was due to brief the Committee against Torture during its sixtieth session, following the submission of an alternative report to the Committee. The request made by the Commission Chair for permission to travel to Geneva was denied on the basis that the national human rights institution was “not mandated to interact with the Committee on the present issue.” Representatives of the Commission were eventually able to participate in a private meeting with the Committee via video link on 18 April 2017.

63. The Committee noted in its concluding observations its serious concern that the Chair of the Commission had not received authorization, which was reportedly required in Pakistan for the National Commission for Human Rights to be able to travel to participate in a private meeting with the Committee (CAT/C/PAK/CO/1, para. 20). The Committee recommended that “the State party should take immediate measures to ensure that the National Commission for Human Rights is able to carry out its mandate fully and in an effective and independent manner, and in full conformity with the Principles relating to the status of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (Paris Principles) (...) including allowing the Commission to meet in person with international human rights mechanisms abroad (ibid. para. 21).

^f OHCHR, End of mission statement of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, 21 July 2017.

18. Rwanda

64. Special procedure mandate holders took action in response to allegations of intimidation and reprisals against human rights defenders, Epimack Kwokwo and Robert Mugabe for their cooperation with the universal periodic review, the Human Rights Council and special procedures. These allegations also drew attention to the declaration that Mr. Kwokwo was *persona non grata* in Rwanda and his subsequent expulsion from the country, and the kidnapping and intense daily interrogation of Mr. Mugabe (see A/HRC/34/75, para. 10, RWA 1/2016 and A/HRC/35/44, para. 12, RWA 1/2017). The mandate holders have been in contact with the Government on these cases.

65. Between September 2014 and March 2015, Epimack Kwokwo, a human rights defender from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Executive Secretary of the League for the Defense of Human Rights in the Great Lakes region, coordinated the work of various civil society organizations reporting on the situation of human rights in Rwanda for a submission to the universal periodic review of the country scheduled for November 2015. According to allegations received, on 12 October 2015 Mr. Kwokwo was stopped and detained by immigration officers for seven hours on the border between Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda as he was coming back from a mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He was interrogated on his work on human rights and the reports produced by the League. His passport was confiscated by immigration authorities. He was also told that he had contributed to “frame Rwanda in a bad light” given his contribution to the submission to the universal periodic review. Between January and March 2016 he was stopped by immigration services five times and asked about his work and his residence in Rwanda. In May 2016, Mr. Kwokwo was interviewed twice at the immigration office in Kigali. He was informed that he was declared *persona non grata* in Rwanda and would be expelled from the country.

66. On 5 July 2016, mandate holders raised concerns with the Government (see A/HRC/34/75, RWA 1/2016). On 22 September 2016, the Government responded that Mr. Kwokwo had been expelled as a result of his repeated violations of and disregard for the immigration laws of Rwanda, and that the expulsion had nothing to do with his human rights work as alleged.

67. On 18 January 2017, mandate holders raised concerns regarding acts of intimidation and reprisals, including attempted kidnapping and intense daily interrogation, allegedly committed against Robert Mugabe, a journalist and human rights defender, following his cooperation with United Nations human rights mechanisms (see A/HRC/35/44, RWA 1/2017). In November 2015, Mr. Mugabe submitted a report to the universal periodic review on Rwanda. In September 2016, he attended the thirty-third session of the Human Rights Council and held meetings with OHCHR. In October 2016, once back in Rwanda, he was subject to intimidation and harassment by plain-clothed armed men on a number of occasions, including attempted kidnapping. When he filed a complaint for the attempted kidnapping, the police instead opened an investigation against him on charges of treason and spreading rumours with the intent to undermine the Government. On 23 December 2016 the police reportedly started daily intense interrogations of Mr. Mugabe. At the time of the finalization of the report, no response had been received from the Government.

19. Saudi Arabia

68. Special procedure mandate holders took action on the case of Issa Al-Hamid, a human rights defender and member of the Saudi Civil and Political Rights Association, who was sentenced to 11 years in prison followed by an 11-year travel ban and fine of 100,000 Riyals. He was originally sentenced to nine years by the Specialized Criminal Court for, *inter alia*, having “communicated with international organizations in order to harm the image of the State”, a charge that according to special procedures appear to also constitute an act of reprisal for cooperating with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights. His sentence was increased by two years on 1 December 2016 by the Court of Appeal.

69. On 13 December 2016, several mandate holders raised concerns over allegations of reprisals against Mr. Al-Hamid for cooperating with the United Nations on human rights (see A/HRC/35/44, para. 12, SAU 8/2016). In its reply dated 13 February 2017, the Government did not address the case of Mr. Al-Hamid, as a response concerning his case had been provided already in relation to a previous communication (SAU 4/2016) in which the Government informed that he was sentenced by a lower court to nine years of imprisonment and a ban to travel outside the Kingdom for a similar period. He was being charged for: his involvement in the establishment of an unlicensed association; non-compliance with the court order to dissolve it; stirring up public opinion; explicitly defaming the faith and loyalty of the members of the Council of Senior Scholars; disparaging the judiciary; and committing offences that undermine national security. The Government did not address the allegations relating to reprisals in either of its responses.

20. South Sudan

70. In the special report of the Secretary-General on the review of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) (S/2016/951), the Secretary-General stressed that United Nations human rights officers face limited access to affected areas to corroborate information or interview witnesses and victims for many reasons, including restrictions imposed by government authorities, security considerations for staff members and increasing threats of reprisal against witnesses, victims and sources, which raised the need to ensure their protection.

71. During his visit to South Sudan in February 2017,⁶ the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights met with a number of Government authorities, including cabinet ministers and heads of security forces, to whom he stressed the absolute need to avoid reprisals and threats against human rights defenders who have cooperated with the United Nations. He addressed specific cases of individuals cooperating with UNMISS and with United Nations entities abroad, including those cases in which individuals were forced to leave South Sudan due to intimidation and threats. In this connection, he drew attention to a specific incident in September 2016 in which human rights defenders were threatened following their meeting with members of the Security Council during their visit to South Sudan. He further addressed the situation of reprisals to the Government in writing in July 2017.

21. Sri Lanka

72. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in his address to the Human Rights Council on 22 March 2017, stressed that he was disturbed to hear reports of intimidation of members of Sri Lankan civil society in the Palais des Nations in Geneva. He referred the case to the Assistant Secretary-General. He also stated that he trusted that the President of the Council will give these cases close attention. In his report to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/34/20), the High Commissioner stressed that reports of harassment or surveillance of human rights defenders and victims of violations had continued in Sri Lanka, albeit to a lesser degree. In its response at the Human Rights Council on 22 March 2017, Sri Lanka stated that it remained firm in its resolve to enhance the fundamental rights of all citizens as equals in a free and democratic country, where fear and intimidation have no place.

73. Special procedure mandate holders have also addressed the allegations of reprisals and intimidation against S. Ganeshnantham and other members of the civil society organization Pupil Salvation Forum relating to their participation in the thirty-fourth session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva (see A/HRC/36/25, LKA 1/2017).

74. On 7 and 9 March 2017, Mr. Ganeshnantham addressed the Human Rights Council and referred to the current human rights situation in Sri Lanka. On 11 March 2017, officers from the Criminal Investigation Department attached to the Kalmunai Police station, in Sri

⁶ OHCHR, "South Sudan: Senior UN human rights official condemns deplorable rights situation, calls for perpetrators to be held to account," 17 February 2017.

Lanka, arrived at Mr. Ganeshnantham's house in Kalmunai, and threatened his relatives. The experts expressed serious concerns at the alleged threats and intimidation which appear to be linked to Mr. Ganeshnantham's participation in the thirty-fourth session of the Human Rights Council. At the time of the finalization of the present report, no response had been received from the Government.

22. Sudan

75. On 28 July 2016, the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan expressed his concerns regarding the interception of four representatives of Sudanese civil society at Khartoum International Airport on their way to Geneva, where they were to participate in pre-session meetings of the universal periodic review on the Sudan (see A/HRC/33/65, para. 28). Sawsan Hassan Elshowaya, Dr. Muawia Shaddad, Faisal Mohamed Salih and Siddig Yousif were stopped and informed of travel bans in place against them. Their passports were confiscated and they were told to report to the Information and Inquiry Section at National Intelligence and Security Service headquarters for further information.

76. On 9 January 2017, special procedure mandate holders expressed concerns with the Government with regard to allegations of reprisals against six human rights defenders, staff members and affiliates of the Centre for Training and Human Development reportedly in part because of their cooperation with the Human Rights Council (see A/HRC/35/44, para. 12, SDN 1/2017).

77. On 22 May 2016, these individuals were arrested by National Intelligence and Security Service agents, with three of them subsequently released on bail. On 15 August 2016, criminal case no. 110/2016 was filed against all of them, who were reportedly charged by the Prosecution Office under the 1991 Penal Code, pertaining to articles 21 (joint acts in execution of criminal conspiracy), 50 (undermining the constitutional system), 51 (waging war against the State), 53 (espionage against the country), and 65 (criminal and terrorist organizations). These charges, if confirmed, could lead to the application of the death penalty. The criminal charges brought against these six human rights defenders, and the ongoing arbitrary detention of three of them, are reportedly in part related to their cooperation with the Human Rights Council. At the time of the finalization of the report, no response had been received from the Government.

23. Tajikistan

78. On 2 June 2016, the Supreme Court of Tajikistan sentenced leaders of the banned Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan (IRPT) to life imprisonment and eleven other members to jail terms ranging from two to 28 years. The IRPT members were reportedly sentenced based on accusations of participation in a criminal group, incitement of national, racial or religious hatred, murder, terrorism, appeals to violent change of the constitutional order, illegal possession or transfer of weapons, and armed rebellion, but the trial was closed and allegedly did not adhere to international human rights standards. On the same day, and in direct response to the conviction, relatives of the convicted IRPT members intended to seek assistance from the United Nations Office in Tajikistan but were intercepted by law enforcement officials who detained all of the individuals who were attempting to reach the United Nations premises.

79. On 7 June 2016, the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression stated in a press release endorsed by multiple mandate holders that he deplored the harsh sentencing of Tajikistan political opposition leaders. He further noted that he had received disturbing reports that relatives of IRPT members were prevented by the police from reaching the United Nations office after the verdict was announced, and had been taken to a district court where they were threatened to be arrested

and fined for not obeying the police. The Special Rapporteur found the situation to be totally unacceptable, and that it furthered the climate of fear in the country.”^h

24. Thailand

80. In June 2016, grant recipients of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, human rights defenders Porpen Khongkachonkiet and Somchai Homla-or of Cross-Cultural Foundation and Anchana Heemmina of Duay Jai Group, were the object of a legal complaint filed by the Royal Thai Army operating in the Southern Border Provinces. The above-mentioned persons had published a report in February 2016 entitled “Fifty-four cases of torture and ill-treatment in the Deep South documented in 2014-2015” funded in part by the United Nations Voluntary Fund. They were consequently accused of publishing false information on torture and ill-treatment committed by military officials. The spokesperson of the Royal Thai Army in the region issued a public statement on 11 February 2016 accusing the organization of bias and of using outdated information to seek funding.

81. On 4 August 2016, some mandate holders expressed concern over criminal defamation charges filed against these human rights defenders in relation to their human rights work on documenting cases of torture and ill-treatment in Thailand (see A/HRC/34/75, para. 11, THA 6/2016). On 5 August 2016, the Government replied that the allegations of torture documented in the report were unfounded. It further stated that the complaint against the three human rights defenders is still under investigation by the police, before it is sent to the prosecutor’s office to decide whether to file the case for further court proceedings.

25. Turkey

82. On 23 January 2017, special procedure mandate holders raised concerns with the Government at allegations of reprisals against Osman Isci, an academic researcher and human rights defender, who was suspended from his research position at Agri Ibrahim Cecen University by emergency decree, for his cooperation with the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression during his official visit to Turkey in November 2016 (see A/HRC/35/44, para. 12, TUR 1/2017). In January 2016, Osman Isci, together with more than 180 other academic and university researchers signed the “Peace Petition”, which was published by Academics for Peace. Many of these academics have since been dismissed, suspended or forced to resign, and all of them continue to be subjected to administrative and judicial investigations (see A/HRC/33/32, para. 10, TUR 3/2016).

83. On 15 December 2016, approximately one month after he participated in a meeting with the Special Rapporteur, Mr. Isci received a document notifying him that, according to Emergency Decree nos. 667, 668 and 675, and Articles 137 and 138 of the Law on Public Officers, he had been placed under administrative investigation and suspended until its completion. In its reply of 11 April 2017, the Government responded that a disciplinary investigation was initiated against Mr. Isci on suspicion that he might be linked to the Kurdistan Worker’s Party (PKK), a suspected terrorist organization. The Government further submitted that under Decree Law 667, public officials who are deemed to be members or have links to terrorist organizations be dismissed from public service. The Government stated that the investigation against Mr. Isci is ongoing, and it has no relevance to his meeting with the Special Rapporteur, nor to his assumed work as a human rights defender.

26. Turkmenistan

84. In its views adopted on 15 July 2016, the Human Rights Committee raised allegations of intimidation and reprisals concerning Navruz Tahirovich Nasyrlyayev who claimed in a submission of 3 September 2012 that the State party had violated his rights under articles 7,

^h OHCHR, “UN expert deplors harsh sentencing of Tajikistan opposition leaders and warns of radicalization,” 7 June 2016.

14(7) and 18(1) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights through his repeated prosecution, conviction and imprisonment as a conscientious objector (see CCPR/C/117/D/2219/2012). The Committee noted with concern that, subsequent to Mr. Nasyrlyayev's submission of a communication to the Committee, according to information provided by Mr. Nasyrlyayev himself, on 24 January 2013 his family home was raided by police officers and that family members and guests had been subjected to mistreatment.

85. The Committee also noted that the State party had not provided any information to the contrary following the call by the Rapporteur on new communications and interim measures, dated 8 February 2013, to abstain from acts of pressure, intimidation or reprisal against Mr. Nasyrlyayev and his relatives. The Committee also recalled that any act of pressure, intimidation or reprisal against a person who has submitted a communication or his or her relatives constitutes a breach of the State party's obligations under the Optional Protocol to cooperate with the Committee in good faith in the implementation of the provisions of the Covenant.

27. United Arab Emirates

86. On 27 March 2017, six special procedure mandate holders expressed their concerns with the Government at allegations of arrest, secret detention and risk of enforced disappearance of Ahmed Mansoor, a prominent human rights defender and blogger, as an act of intimidation and reprisal for his collaboration with the Human Rights Council, the special procedures, the universal periodic review mechanism and treaty bodies (see A/HRC/36/25, para. 13, ARE 1/2017). On 20 March 2017, security agents searched the home of Mr. Mansoor, confiscated laptops and other equipment; they arrested Mr. Mansoor, and took him to an unknown location. The reasons behind his arrest, the alleged charges against him, and his place of detention remained unknown at that time. On 28 March 2017, three mandate holders issued a press release, stating their fear that his arrest and secret detention may constitute an act of reprisal for his engagement with United Nations human rights mechanisms.ⁱ

87. On 25 April 2017, the Government responded that the Office of the Public Prosecutor concerning cybercrime arrested Mr. Mansoor on 20 March 2017 on the charge of circulating false and misleading information on the Internet with a view to spreading hatred and sectarianism. He was informed of the charges and placed in pretrial detention in Abu Dhabi Central Prison. He was allowed to appoint a lawyer and his family was allowed to visit him, in accordance with the procedures applicable to detention facilities. The Government concluded that allegations concerning arbitrary detention, lack of information concerning the place of detention and lack of specifying charges against him are false. The Government's response did not address the allegations concerning intimidation and reprisals. Mr. Mansoor reportedly remains in solitary confinement, while the place of detention remains unverified.

28. Uzbekistan

88. On 1 March 2017, Elena Urlaeva, head of the Human Rights Defenders Alliance of Uzbekistan, was allegedly arrested in Tashkent and taken to a police station, reportedly the day before her planned meeting with representatives of the International Labour Organization and the World Bank. At the police station, Ms. Urlaeva was insulted and mocked by police officers who told her that she needed psychiatric treatment, and was then forcibly transferred to a psychiatric facility in Tashkent. On 24 March, Ms. Urlaeva was released after 24 days of psychiatric detention.

89. On 5 April 2017, four mandate holders expressed their concerns regarding these incidents, which appear to be related to her cooperation with international organizations (see A/HRC/36/25, para. 13, UZB 1/2017). On 28 April 2017, the Government responded that, according to a 2006 ruling of the Miabad Interregional Civil Court in Tashkent, Ms. Urlaeva

ⁱ OHCHR, "UN Rights Experts Urge UAE: Immediately release human rights defender Ahmed Mansoor," 28 March 2017.

suffers from mental illness and is legally incompetent. The Government did not address the allegations of intimidation and reprisals in its response.

29. Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

90. In the previous report of the Secretary-General, reference was made to the concerns expressed by independent experts with regard to the pattern of discrediting and intimidating human rights defenders in reprisal for their cooperation with the United Nations and regional bodies on human rights (A/HRC/33/19, paras.32-37). Similar allegations were received in the past. In a press briefing held on 19 May 2017, the spokesperson of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights referred to the case of Henrique Capriles, who was scheduled to meet the High Commissioner in New York on the same day but was prevented from leaving the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to do so. The High Commissioner expressed his hope that the incident was not a reprisal linked to the planned meeting with him in New York. The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights addressed cases of reprisals with the Government in April 2017.

30. Multiple

91. On 21 October 2016, the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture addressed a letter to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights with regard to concerns about the increasing number of instances in which State authorities resort to freezing the banking assets of human rights organizations working for victims of torture, in order to impede external funding, including from the Voluntary Fund. On 1 November 2016, the High Commissioner in his response expressed concern about the feedback provided on situations of reprisals against a number of the Fund's grantees, and stated that he would share these observations with the Assistant Secretary-General.

Annex II

Information on alleged cases included in the previous report

1. Honduras

1. The Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, in her report following her mission to Honduras in November 2015, referred to the plight of indigenous leaders working on land issues, including the case of Berta Cáceres (see A/HRC/33/42/Add.2, paras. 21 and 22). She stressed that the murder of indigenous leaders who defend their lands, including a large number of leaders of the Tolupán, Garífuna, Lenca, Chortí and Pech peoples, give rise to the most complaints to the Office of the Special Prosecutor for Ethnic Groups and Cultural Heritage, in addition to cases of assault, attempted homicide and violence against indigenous women.

2. The murder of Ms. Cáceres, an influential member of the Lenca community who headed protests against hydroelectric projects in the Lenca region, drew the attention of the world to this problem. She further stated that “it is a matter of enormous concern that many of the indigenous leaders that have been killed, such as Ms. Cáceres, had been granted protective measures by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, with a view to protecting their lives and ensuring their personal safety. The murders have occurred despite a law on the protection of human rights defenders adopted in April 2015, which establishes mechanisms to provide an institutional response to requests for protection for human rights defenders, including early warning measures at times of particular danger. Moreover, given the strong presence of the army and the military police in the country, evidence received about collusion by the police and the armed forces with private or business interests, including organized crime groups in indigenous territories, is worrying. All this exacerbates the violence and impunity suffered by the indigenous peoples (ibid., para 21).”

3. During the thirty-third session of the Human Rights Council in September 2016, the mandate holder referred again to the plight of indigenous leaders defending their land rights and the implications of Ms. Cáceres’s death on the situation of indigenous rights defenders in the country, who are facing deaths, threats and violence in relation to their work. The Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders also referred to the death of Ms. Cáceres in a press release on 6 October 2016^a and in his statement to the 34th session of the Human Rights Council.

2. Iraq

4. The cases of Imad Amara and Faisal Al-Tamimi were included in the report on cooperation with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights (see A/HRC/33/19, para. 24). The Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders also expressed concern about the allegations of arrest and ill-treatment of both cases in his observations on communications report (see A/HRC/34/52/Add.1, para. 676) in retaliation for their legitimate human rights work at the Al Wissam Humanitarian Assembly, especially since these acts might be in reprisal for their cooperation with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights.

3. Japan

5. In the report on cooperation with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights (A/HRC/33/19, para. 25), reference was made to allegations of reprisals against Kazuko Ito. The Special Rapporteur on the situation of human

^a OHCHR, “Honduras: Experto de la ONU advierte sobre el riesgo de impunidad en el caso de Berta Cáceres”, 6 October 2016.

rights defenders, in his report on observations on communications, referred to the substantive response of the Government of Japan to the communication dated 30 May 2016 regarding allegations of surveillance of Ms. Ito, who had facilitated and organised meetings of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression with representatives of civil society during his official country visit to Japan in April 2016 (see A/HRC/34/52/Add.1, paras. 399 and 400). These allegations stemmed from a magazine that reported information received through a leaked memo, allegedly produced by Japanese intelligence agency members, ordering the surveillance of Ms. Ito's movements ahead of the Special Rapporteur's visit to Japan. According to the Government's response, following Ms. Ito's inquiry and the communication sent from special procedures, the allegations were investigated and both the Public Security Intelligence Agency (PSIA) and the National Police Agency confirmed that they "had neither received such instructions nor conducted such research activities as were reported by the media."

4. Morocco

6. In the report on cooperation with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights of 16 August 2016, concerns were raised about Ms. El Ghalia Djimi, who was subjected to reprisals for seeking to engage with the Human Rights Council (see A/HRC/33/19, para 26). The Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, in his report on observations on communications, reiterated concerns that Ms. El Ghalia Djimi did not receive authorization to leave the country to travel to the thirty-first session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva (A/HRC/34/52/Add.1, para. 722). The mandate holder further expressed concern that the case of Ms. El Ghalia Djimi is not isolated, but is rather representative of a larger trend of reprisals, harassment and intimidation of human rights defenders. Information has since been received that Ms. El Ghalia Djimi was able to attend the thirty-second session of the Human Rights Council.

5. Uganda

7. The report on cooperation with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights of 16 August 2016 (see A/HRC/33/19) referred to the case of Douglas Bulongo, the Executive Director of the United Association for Peace and Development, who was subjected to reprisals in connection with his role in the submission of a report by the Lutheran World Federation to the universal periodic review on Uganda in November 2016. Mr. Bulongo was allegedly attacked on multiple occasions, including an instance on 1 March 2016 when a group of armed men broke into his home and led all his family members into one room. The armed men remained in Mr. Bulongo's home until he handed over all the workshop documents on the review process of Uganda (A/HRC/33/19, para. 31). On 20 March 2016 Mr. Bulongo was arrested and detained by police officers. He has reportedly since been granted bail by the court, yet still remains in hiding as he has allegedly been receiving threats by unknown persons.
