As the 41st session of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) approaches, Amnesty International is calling on all states to ensure the HRC fulfils its mandate to promote and protect human rights, to respond to human rights crises and to prevent violations of human rights. We urge all states to stand with victims and survivors of human rights violations and abuses around the world, by leading and supporting a range of important thematic and country-specific initiatives.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL’S RECOMMENDATIONS TO UN MEMBER STATES

SUDAN - URGENT HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL ACTION REQUIRED

Amnesty International calls on all States to work together to urgently convene a special session of the HRC\(^1\), or at the least an urgent debate, to address the escalating crisis in Sudan. The outcome of such a special session or urgent debate should be to urgently dispatch an investigative mechanism – as called for by several Special Procedures of the HRC\(^2\) - to monitor, verify and report on human rights violations in the country, with a view to making recommendations on preventing further human rights violations and abuses in relation to peaceful demonstrations, and ensuring accountability. Such a mechanism should be designed to ensure complementarity and coordination between the UN and African Union (AU) and should, to the extent possible, draw on the expertise of appropriate regional and international bodies, such as the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights. The mechanism should be mandated to prepare and present a report to be shared with the HRC and the UN Security Council. It should be operationalised as swiftly as possible and mandated to provide regular updates on the human rights situation in Sudan.

SERIOUS HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATIONS NOT ALREADY ON THE HRC AGENDA

In addition to the above urgent action on Sudan, we urge all States to show leadership to ensure the HRC addresses a number of human rights crises not already on its agenda, which meet all – or most – of the objective criteria for HRC action identified in the HRC32 joint statement\(^3\) on preventing, responding to and addressing human rights violations. It is crucial for the HRC to address these situations if it is to fulfil credibly its mandate under operative paragraphs 3 and 5(f) of GA resolution 60/251. In particular, we urge States to ensure that the HRC:

- Breaks its silence and adopts a resolution on the horrific human rights violations ongoing in the Philippines, where thousands of people, overwhelmingly from poor and marginalised communities are suspected of being victims of extrajudicial executions. Given the failure of the Government to stop the killings, the increased support among legislators for the President’s deadly approach following the victory of a huge majority of his candidates in the mid-term elections, and the country’s departure from the ICC in March, it is more urgent than ever for the HRC to put in place an independent international investigation into the human rights situation in the Philippines. Such an investigation would establish the facts, challenge the climate of total impunity and take steps towards providing justice for victims. An explicit call for such an investigation was recently issued by a group of UN Special Procedures\(^4\). If the

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4. OHCHR, UN human rights experts call for independent probe into Philippines violations, 7 June 2019,
HRC again fails to act on this situation, it will send the dangerous message that international community will allow the killings to continue with impunity.

- Establishes a monitoring mechanism over the human rights situation in Saudi Arabia and calls on the authorities to:
  - immediately and unconditionally release all individuals detained for exercising their fundamental freedoms, the dropping of all charges against them and removal of travel bans against their families and lawyers;
  - conduct prompt, effective and credible investigations into all allegations of torture, hold perpetrators accountable and provide victims with remedy in line with international standards;
  - immediately abolish the male guardianship system and repeal other laws that discriminate against women and girls and establish an immediate moratorium on the use of the death penalty with an aim towards its abolition.

Member States should also engage fully with the report and recommendations of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions in connection with her independent probe into the killing of Saudi Journalist Jamal Khashoggi and join or reiterate the call for an independent follow-up investigation to be put in place by the UN Secretary-General and for the Saudi authorities to demonstrate non-repetition, including through actions noted above (such as releasing detained individuals and prompt, effective and credible investigations).

- Mandates an independent investigation into the credible allegations that up to one million predominantly Muslim people are being arbitrarily detained in “transformation-through-education” facilities across the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (Xinjiang). Given the failure of China to allow access to independent human rights monitors to Xinjiang, and the Chinese authorities’ rejection of all UPR recommendations urging them to do so, a failure to respond to this serious situation would send a dangerous message that China can act with impunity.

- Addresses the current crisis in Venezuela, taking urgent action to create a Commission of Inquiry. Heightened scrutiny is essential given the scale, gravity and continued deterioration of the human rights situation in the country, the total lack of access to justice at national level, and the absence of oversight from the Inter-American System since April 2019. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights will present her comprehensive written report on the situation to HRC41 (pursuant to HRC resolution 39/1), providing an important opportunity for the HRC to respond by mandating additional and more robust monitoring and reporting on the situation.

KEY PRIORITIES ON THE AGENDA OF THE HRC

In addition to the above, States should work together at the HRC to:

- Support the full implementation in this session of the mandate established by the HRC ten sessions ago to publish a database of all business enterprises involved in certain activities in the Israeli Settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including through individual and joint statements by States.

- Renew the important mandate of the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity;

- Ensure the continuity of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea - a crucial mandate for addressing the dire human rights situation in the country. It would be a significant blow to the credibility and objectivity of the HRC if this situation were to be dropped or “downgraded”, given that there has been no improvement of the human rights situation on the ground.

- Strongly support the renewal of other important Special Procedures mandates, including the Special Rapporteur on Belarus, and other important existing Special Procedures mandates as well as supporting the renewal of ongoing OHCHR monitoring and reporting on the situation in Ukraine.

- Engage actively in the interactive dialogues with the Special Rapporteur on Myanmar, and with the High Commissioner, on the situation of the Rohingya specifically. The situation in Myanmar remains dire, as documented recently by

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Amnesty International in a research briefing on new military abuses in Rakhine State, and a major new report examining the impact of conflict and displacement on older persons across Myanmar.

universal periodic review
Make substantive statements during the adoption of review outcomes on the 14 countries that were reviewed during the 32nd session of the UPR Working Group in January 2019, focussing on follow-up and implementation of UPR commitments made by States under review.

maintaining and strengthening the international human rights framework
Push back against any initiatives that aim to undermine the international human rights system and mechanisms.

For more information on any of the above issues, please contact IAP-Geneva@amnesty.org.
