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## 28th session of the UNHRC

### European Parliament resolution of 12 March 2015 on the EU's priorities for the UN Human Rights Council in 2015 (2015/2572(RSP))

(2016/C 316/21)

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to the UN human rights conventions and the optional protocols thereto, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW),
  - having regard to United Nations General Assembly Resolution 60/251 establishing the Human Rights Council (UNHRC),
  - having regard to the European Convention on Human Rights, the European Social Charter and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights,
  - having regard to the EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy, adopted on 25 June 2012,
  - having regard to its previous resolutions on the United Nations Human Rights Council,
  - having regard to its previous resolutions on the violation of human rights, including its urgency resolutions on the issues,
  - having regard to the Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World 2013, and the European Union's policy on the matter,
  - having regard to the conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council of 9 February 2015 on EU priorities at UN human rights fora,
  - having regard to Articles 2, 3(5), 18, 21, 27 and 47 of the Treaty on European Union,
  - having regard to the 28th session of the UNHRC to be held from 2 to 27 March 2015,
  - having regard to Rule 123(2) and (4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas respect for, and the promotion and safeguarding of, the universality of human rights is part of the European Union's ethical and legal acquis and one of the cornerstones of European unity and integrity;
- B. whereas human rights are inherent to all human beings irrespective of nationality, race, sex, ethnic origin, religion or any other status, and whereas respect for these rights is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and in subsequent international human rights conventions, declarations and resolutions;
- C. whereas all human rights — whether civil, political, economic, social or cultural — are indivisible, interrelated and interdependent, and whereas the deprivation of any one of these rights has a direct and adverse impact on the others;
- D. whereas failure to respect human rights and lack of legitimate democratic participation lead to instability, failed states, humanitarian crises and armed conflicts;
- E. whereas the Union's action in its relations with third countries is guided by Article 21 of the Lisbon Treaty, which reaffirms the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms and provides for the respect of human dignity, the principles of equality and solidarity, and the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law;

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- F. whereas all states have an obligation to respect the basic rights of their respective populations and a duty to take concrete action to facilitate respect for those rights at national level, and to cooperate at international level with a view to eliminating obstacles to the realisation of human rights in all areas;
- G. whereas the regular sessions of the Human Rights Council, the appointment of Special Rapporteurs, the Universal Periodic Review mechanism and the Special Procedures addressing either specific country situations or thematic issues contribute to the promotion of, and respect for, human rights, democracy and the rule of law;
- H. whereas, regrettably, some of the current members of the Human Rights Council are acknowledged as being among the worst human rights offenders and have bad records in terms of cooperation with the UN Special Procedures and compliance with their reporting requirements vis-à-vis the UN human rights treaty bodies;

### ***UN Human Rights Council***

1. Welcomes the EU's priorities for the upcoming 28th regular session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), as set out in the Council conclusions of 9 February 2015;
2. Welcomes the appointment of Ambassador Joachim R cker as President of the UNHRC for 2015;
3. Congratulates Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein on his appointment as UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR), and reiterates its strongest support for his efforts and for his mandate;
4. Welcomes the presence of Ms Mogherini, Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, at the UNHRC high-level session, as this sends the right signal regarding the EU's strong commitment to the multilateral human rights system;
5. Welcomes the annual report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to the UN General Assembly, covering the period from December 2013 to November 2014, and expresses its full support for the independence and integrity of his Office; stresses that it is important to defend this independence, so as to ensure that the High Commissioner can continue to exercise his task in an effective and impartial manner; reiterates that the UNHCHR needs to be adequately funded;
6. Recalls the commitment of the European Parliament and its Subcommittee on Human Rights to supporting a strong multilateral human rights system under the aegis of the UN, including the Third Committee of the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, together with the work of related UN specialised agencies such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO), and of UN Special Procedures;
7. Encourages the EEAS, in particular through the EU Delegations in New York and Geneva, to increase EU coherence by means of timely and substantive consultation in order to present the EU position with one voice; reaffirms the importance of integrating the work being done in New York and Geneva in the context of the UN General Assembly, the Third Committee and the Human Rights Council into the EU's relevant internal and external activities in order to ensure coherence;
8. Considers that the continued harassment and detention of human rights defenders and opposition figures by a number of UNHRC members undermines the credibility of the UNHRC; reiterates its position that UNHRC members should be elected from among states which uphold respect for human rights, the rule of law and democracy and which have agreed to extend standing invitations to all Special Procedures, and urges the Member States to promote and adopt human rights performance criteria, which should apply to any state to be elected as a member of the UNHRC; urges the Member States to encourage transparent, open and competitive processes for the election of UNHRC members;

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9. Reiterates its support for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism and its appreciation of the UPR's valuable work, and calls on members to actively prepare their UPR, including by involving civil society, to engage in the interactive dialogue during the UPR session and in the debates on the adoption of the UPR outcomes, to implement the UPR recommendations and to take concrete measures to improve and uphold the fulfilment of their human rights obligations;
10. Continues to oppose 'block voting' within the UNHRC; urges the member countries of the UNHRC to remain transparent in their voting;
11. Calls for the EU and its Member States to continue to follow up the UPR recommendations in all EU policy dialogues with the countries concerned in order to seek ways to support countries in implementing the recommendations;
12. Reiterates its support for the Special Procedures and the independent status of the mandate holders, which enable them to fulfil their function with full impartiality, calls on all states to cooperate with these procedures and encourages the Member States to expose cases of non-cooperation by states with Special Procedure mandate holders;
13. Considers it important to send parliamentary delegations to the UNHRC sessions and to other relevant UN General Assembly sessions;
14. Considers it regrettable that the scope for interaction between civil society and the UNHRC continues to shrink and that NGOs are being offered fewer opportunities to speak at these sessions; urges the EU and the UNHRC to ensure that civil society is allowed to contribute as fully as possible to the 28<sup>th</sup> session of the UNHRC and to the Universal Periodic Review process and other UN human rights mechanisms, without fear of reprisals upon return to their home country;

***Civil and political rights***

15. Reaffirms that freedom of expression, which is the cornerstone of every free and democratic society, is a fundamental right of any individual; strongly condemns the assassination in France in January 2015 of 12 people, including cartoonists at the *Charlie Hebdo* newspaper, and of four people in a Jewish supermarket, together with the assassination of a film director and a synagogue guard in Copenhagen, by terrorists targeting freedom of speech and religion;
16. Condemns the use of religion by extremist and jihadist groups in all countries, and particularly in Syria, Iraq, Libya, Myanmar, Nigeria and Central Africa, whose actions include gun and bomb attacks, suicide bombings, kidnappings and other violent acts terrorising the population; takes the view that the fight against terrorism calls for action to address its root causes, which include social exclusion, political marginalisation and inequality; calls for greater efforts to protect the rights of people belonging to religious minorities; urges that human rights and the rule of law be upheld in all counter-terrorism activities;
17. Expresses its concern about all restrictions on freedom of assembly and association, including bans on civil society organisations, the aggressive use of criminal defamation laws and other restrictive laws, excessive registration and reporting requirements, and overly restrictive rules on foreign funding, and reaffirms that freedom of association and peaceful assembly are fundamental elements of human rights;
18. Calls on all governments to promote and support civil society organisations and human rights defenders and to allow them to operate without fear, repression or intimidation, to cooperate with the UNHRC in the UPR mechanism and to ensure that countries responsible for reprisals against human rights activists are held accountable, in particular for fatal reprisals like the one that led to the death in March 2014 of human rights activist Cao Shunli in China for attempting to board a flight to attend the UNHRC in Geneva in September 2013;

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19. Reiterates its condemnation of the use of the death penalty and strongly supports the introduction of a moratorium on the death penalty, as a step towards abolition;

20. Reiterates the importance of the fight against torture and other forms of ill-treatment, and of the priority that the EU has committed to placing on this issue, including with regard to children, and to facilitating the work of the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture; urges the EEAS, the Commission and the EU Member States to demonstrate their common commitment to eradicating torture and supporting victims, in particular by continuing — or, where applicable, starting — to contribute to the UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture and the Special Fund established by the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture;

21. Expresses concern about continued and widespread discrimination against, and violations of the rights of, migrants, including asylum seekers and refugees; calls for the EU and its Member States to support the work of the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of migrants, together with the implementation of his recommendations; calls on governments to respect the human rights and inherent dignity of migrants, to put an end to arbitrary arrest and detention and, in order to avoid excessive detention of irregular migrants, to review detention periods and use alternatives to detention; calls on governments to respect, in all circumstances, the principle of non-refoulement and to comply fully with their international legal obligations with regard to the expulsion of migrants; calls on states to put in place, if they have not yet done so, systems and procedures to ensure full compliance with their international human rights law obligations by all their programmes and institutions in the field of migration;

22. Supports the UNHRC Special Rapporteur's latest report and conclusions on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance; calls for the EU and its Member States to implement the Special Rapporteur's recommendations in its internal policy to combat the spread of racial, ethnic and xenophobic hatred and incitement over the internet and through social media networks by taking appropriate legislative measures, with full respect for other fundamental rights such as freedom of expression and opinion;

23. Recognises that the rapid evolution of information and communication technologies has transformed the environment for the exercise of freedom of expression across the world, generating both significant advantages and serious concerns; welcomes, in this context, the Council's adoption in May 2014 of the EU Guidelines on Freedom of Expression Online and Offline, and condemns all restrictions on digital communication, including those targeting civil society actors; reiterates the need to pay particular attention to the rights of journalists and bloggers;

24. Encourages the UNHRC to continue the debate on the right to privacy and, to that end, to appoint a UN Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy, especially in the context of digital communications;

### ***Social and economic rights***

25. Notes that the UN post-millennium development agenda has the target of ending poverty by 2030 with a holistic approach to economic, social and environmental issues; welcomes the UN Secretary-General's synthesis report ahead of the UN Special Summit on the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals agenda; supports the Secretary-General's calls for an approach centred on people's needs and rights in order to end poverty;

26. Considers it important to address rising and extreme inequalities in order to fight poverty in general and to promote social and economic rights by facilitating access to food, water, education, health care and adequate housing, in particular; highlights, in this context, the increasing problem of land grabbing, which needs to be addressed;

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27. Is of the opinion that corruption, tax evasion, mismanagement of public goods and lack of accountability contribute to the violation of citizens' rights, as they divert funds from investment in much-needed public services such as education, basic health services and other social infrastructure, thus perpetuating the poverty of populations; recalls that under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, governments have an obligation to respect their citizens' rights by making adequate resources available; stresses, in this connection, that particular attention needs to be paid to the protection of human rights defenders working on the promotion of economic, social and cultural rights;

28. Reiterates its support for the establishment of a UN Special Rapporteur on financial crime, corruption and human rights;

### ***Business and human rights***

29. Strongly supports the effective and comprehensive dissemination and implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights within and outside the EU, and emphasises the need to take all necessary measures to address gaps in the effective implementation of the UN Guiding Principles, including as regards access to justice; welcomes the initiative relating to a regulation setting up a system of supply chain due diligence for responsible sourcing of minerals from conflict-affected areas; calls on all stakeholders to take an active role in the 11th session of the UN Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises, and to support efforts to align their policies with the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights; reiterates its request to the Commission to report by the end of 2015 on the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights by the EU Member States;

30. Encourages EU delegations around the world to engage with EU businesses in order to promote respect for human rights, and to ensure that 'business and human rights' is included among the focus themes in the local calls for proposals of the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights;

31. Believes that business and human rights can reinforce each other by creating new business potential in those regions that most need sustainable and responsible investment and by contributing to general respect for human rights in developing countries;

32. Calls for the EU and its Member States to engage in the emerging debate on a legally binding international instrument on business and human rights within the UN system;

### ***Women's rights***

33. Points out that gender mainstreaming, which involves the reorganisation, improvement, development and assessment of policies to ensure that an equal opportunities approach is incorporated into all policies — at all levels and at all stages — by those involved in policymaking, is an important tool in achieving gender equality;

34. Calls for the EU to participate actively in the 59th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, and to continue to fight all attempts to undermine the UN's Beijing Platform for Action, which will be reviewed on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women as regards, among other elements, access to education and health as basic human rights, and sexual and reproductive rights;

35. Observes critically that despite the progress made so far in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women, discriminatory laws remain in force in many countries, in particular in the area of the family and access to property; observes that women are still vastly under-represented in decision-making positions and that violence against women remains widespread, while access to justice remains limited despite the number of women who die every day as a result of domestic violence; expresses its grave concern that in some countries setbacks have been observed, in particular in the area of sexual and reproductive rights;

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36. Strongly condemns the use of sexual violence against women, including crimes such as mass rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, gender-based forms of persecution including female genital mutilation, trafficking, early and forced marriages, honour killings and all other forms of sexual violence of comparable gravity, including when used as a tactic of war; calls again for the EU and all its Member States to sign and ratify the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention);

37. Recalls the EU's commitment to mainstreaming human rights and gender aspects in common security and defence policy missions, in line with the landmark UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 on women, peace and security; reiterates, in this connection, its call for the EU and its Member States to support, in the process of building sustainable reconciliation, the systematic participation of women as a vital component of peace processes, and to recognise the need to mainstream gender perspectives in conflict prevention, peacekeeping operations, humanitarian assistance and post-conflict reconstruction and democratic transition processes;

38. Stresses that female genital mutilation (FGM) is a form of torture; stresses the continuing need for the EU to work with third countries in eradicating the practice of FGM; reminds those Member States with national legislation criminalising FGM that they must use this legislation when their citizens are found to have undergone it;

39. Welcomes the ICC's inclusion of sexual and gender-based crimes, including rape, sexual assault and humiliation, and its recommendation that these crimes should be considered war crimes;

#### ***Children's rights***

40. Expresses its concern that, while progress has been made since the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989, at least 58 million children, particularly girls, children from poor families, children with disabilities and children in conflict areas, do not attend school, and many children still suffer from diseases that can be easily prevented, while others are engaged in child labour;

41. Calls on all states to commit themselves to eliminating the worst forms of child labour as defined by Article 3 of ILO Convention No 182, which include child slavery, trafficking, prostitution and hazardous work affecting a child's physical and mental health;

42. Recalls that one of the primary obligations of the state is to provide all children with education by increasing opportunities, creating adequate institutions and addressing the structural causes of major impediments to universal primary education, including drop-out rates, which remain a major impediment to universal primary education;

43. Calls for adequate EU funding for demobilisation and reintegration programmes for children associated with armed conflicts and for ex-child-soldiers; recalls its strong support for the campaign 'Children, not Soldiers' as expressed during the hearing on the same topic, held in the Subcommittee on Human Rights, on 3 December 2014; welcomes the annual reports submitted by the UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict and the UN Special Representative on Violence against Children, together with the report of the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography;

#### ***Rights of LGBTI persons***

44. Expresses its concern about the recent increase in the number of discriminatory laws and practices, and of acts of violence against individuals, on the basis of their sexual orientation and gender identity; encourages close monitoring of the situation of LGBTI people, including in Nigeria and Gambia, where recently introduced anti-LGBTI laws threaten the lives of sexual minorities; expresses its strong concern regarding so-called 'anti-propaganda' laws limiting freedom of expression and assembly, including in countries on the European continent; welcomes the UNHRC resolution on combating violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, adopted on 26 September 2014; reaffirms its support for the High Commissioner's continued work to promote and protect the enjoyment of all human rights by LGBTI people, in particular through statements, reports and the Free & Equal campaign; encourages the High Commissioner to continue fighting discriminatory laws and practices;

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### ***Climate change and human rights***

45. Stresses that the impact of climate change on groups and individuals in vulnerable situations is high, especially in low-income countries and in coastal and low-lying island states that lack the economic resources to adapt to severe environmental changes;

46. Notes with concern that indigenous people are particularly affected by climate-change-related incidents; notes, in this regard, that most indigenous people live below the poverty threshold and have little or no access to representation, political decision-making or justice systems;

47. Welcomes the UNHRC's recognition that environmental changes have an adverse impact on the livelihood of populations, and are obstacles to the realisation of fundamental, internationally recognised human rights; urges the States Parties, therefore, to adopt urgent and ambitious mitigation and adaptation measures at the upcoming 2015 Climate Change Conference in Paris;

48. Requests that the Commission and the EEAS participate actively in the debate on the term 'climate refugee', including its possible definition in international law or in any legally binding international agreement;

### ***Fight against impunity and the International Criminal Court (ICC)***

49. Reiterates its full support for the work of the ICC in its role of ending the impunity of the perpetrators of the most serious crimes of concern to the international community and to provide justice for the victims of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide; remains vigilant regarding any attempts to undermine its legitimacy or independence; urges the EU and its Member States to cooperate with the Court and provide it with strong diplomatic, political and financial support, including in the UN; calls for the EU, its Member States and its Special Representatives to actively promote the ICC, the enforcement of its decisions and the fight against impunity for Rome Statute crimes; welcomes the recent ratification of the Rome Statute by the Palestinian Authority in January 2015;

### ***Indigenous peoples***

50. Calls on the EEAS, the Commission and the Member States to support the review of the mandate of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, in line with the Outcome Document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (UN General Assembly Resolution 69/2), with a view to monitoring, evaluating and improving the implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; urges the EU Member States to request that all Special Procedure mandate holders give special attention to issues affecting indigenous women and girls, and systematically report such issues to the UNHRC; urges the EEAS and the Member States to actively support the development of the system-wide action plan on indigenous peoples, as requested by the UN General Assembly in its September 2014 resolution, especially as regards the organisation of regular consultation of indigenous peoples as part of that process;

### ***International cultural and sports events and human rights***

51. Denounces the increasing practice by authoritarian states of hosting mega sports or cultural events in order to boost their international legitimacy while further restricting domestic dissent; calls for the EU and its Member States to actively raise this issue, including at the UNHRC, and to engage with national sports federations, corporate actors and civil society organisations on the modalities of their participation in such events, including with regard to the first European Games in Baku in 2015 and the FIFA World Cup in Russia in 2018 and Qatar in 2022;

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***Drones and autonomous weapons***

52. Reiterates its call to the Council for the development of an EU common position on the use of armed drones, giving utmost importance to respect for human rights and international humanitarian law and addressing issues such as the legal framework, proportionality, accountability, the protection of civilians and transparency; urges the EU, once again, to ban the development, production and use of fully autonomous weapons which enable strikes to be carried out without human intervention; insists that human rights be part of all dialogues with third countries on counter-terrorism;

***EU human rights mainstreaming***

53. Calls for the EU to promote the universality and indivisibility of human rights, including civil and political, economic, social and cultural rights, in accordance with Article 21 of the Lisbon Treaty and the General Provisions on the Union's External Action;

54. Calls for the EU, its Member States, the Commission and the EEAS to mainstream human rights in all their external policy areas with third countries; stresses also that EU human rights policy needs to ensure that its internal and external policies are coherent, in line with the EU Treaty obligation, and to avoid double standards when it comes to respect for human rights;

55. Calls for the EU to adopt a rights-based approach and to integrate respect for human rights into trade, investment, public services and development cooperation, and into its common security and defence policy;

***EU priorities on country-related issues****Ukraine*

56. Expresses its grave concern over the violence and armed conflict in eastern Ukraine; hopes that the ceasefire agreement, based on the Minsk Agreement, will hold; condemns the large-scale human rights violations in the conflict and the consequences of recent fighting; fully supports the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission and the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, and calls for the strengthening of the latter; highlights its strong concern at the fate of IDPs as a result of the armed conflict in the south-eastern regions; condemns the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia's aggressive and expansionist policy, which constitutes a threat to the unity and independence of Ukraine; remains concerned about the discrimination and widespread human rights violations committed against the local population in this region, in particular the Crimean Tatars; calls on the EU Member States to support all possible efforts at UN level to fight impunity and to conduct impartial investigations into the violent events and human rights violations linked to the crackdown against the Maidan demonstrations, the illegal annexation of Crimea, and the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine; calls for respect for international humanitarian law and principles to protect civilians in the conflict;

*Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)*

57. Welcomes the planned extension of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK); welcomes too the UN General Assembly resolution encouraging the UN Security Council to take appropriate action to ensure accountability, including by giving consideration to referring the situation in the DPRK to the ICC; calls on the Human Rights Council to reiterate its call for accountability, including with regard to those responsible for crimes against humanity pursuant to policies established at the highest level of the state; welcomes the establishment of a field-based structure in the Republic of Korea to strengthen the monitoring of the situation and documentation of evidence with a view to ensuring accountability, urges all states to cooperate with this structure, and calls on the Human Rights Council to step up its attention to the situation in the DPRK by convening a formal Panel to feature voices of victims of rights violations in the context of a forthcoming session of the Human Rights Council;

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*Iran*

58. Welcomes the UNHRC resolution of March 2014 on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the extension of the Special Rapporteur's mandate, and calls on Iran to allow the UN Special Rapporteur entry into the country as a crucial indicator of Iran's willingness to take steps towards opening up a dialogue on human rights; reiterates its condemnation of the death penalty in Iran, including for minors, which is often carried out following a judicial process which does not comply with internationally accepted minimum standards on fair trial and due process; remains concerned at the high rate of executions without due process or fair trial; supports the joint statement of August 2014 by the UN Special Procedures mandate holders condemning the wave of arrests and sentencing of civil society actors in Iran; calls for the EU and the UNHRC to continue to monitor closely the systematic abuse of human rights, and to ensure that human rights remain a key priority in all dealings with the Iranian Government; calls on the Iranian authorities to abide by international human rights law, under which the execution of juvenile offenders is a violation of international minimum standards, and not to carry out the execution of any juvenile offender;

*Myanmar/Burma*

59. Supports the UN Special Rapporteur's latest report on the human rights situation in Myanmar, which recognises the progress made so far while identifying remaining areas of major concern; calls on the Myanmar Government to mainstream human rights, including the rights of minorities, into the country's institutional and legal framework and all policy areas, and to fully respect freedom of expression and assembly; expresses its concerns over the proposed legislation on the 'protection of race and religion', which includes four draft bills on interfaith marriage, religious conversion, monogamy and population control; calls on the UNHRC to renew the mandate of the Special Rapporteur under Item 4, to reiterate its serious concern at the situation of the Rohingya minority in Rakhine State, which is exacerbated by the fact that this community lacks legal status and thus continues to face systemic discrimination, and calls for full, transparent and independent investigations into all reports of human rights violations against the Rohingya, and to accelerate the process of opening an OHCHR country office with a full monitoring and reporting mandate; deplores the attacks on civilians in the Kachin and Shan States, sexual violence committed by security forces during armed conflict, the existence of political prisoners, the harassment of human rights defenders, activists, and media professionals, extrajudicial killings, land confiscation, and the targeting of religious and ethnic minorities; takes the view that the negotiation of an investment agreement between the EU and Myanmar should be considered carefully, as foreign investment in the country risks exacerbating human rights violations;

*Belarus*

60. Expresses its profound concern at the continued violation of human rights in Belarus; condemns the three executions carried out in 2014, the harassment of human rights defenders, the persecution of independent journalists, the censorship of all internet-based communications and the restrictive legislation on non-governmental organisations; calls for the renewal of the UN Special Rapporteur's mandate on the human rights situation in Belarus at the 29<sup>th</sup> session of the Council, and calls on the government to grant full access to UN Special Procedure mandate holders, including the Special Rapporteur; calls for the unconditional release and rehabilitation of all remaining political prisoners;

*Bahrain*

61. Expresses its continued concern about the crackdown on opposition leaders, civil society actors and activists in Bahrain, and the situation of human rights defenders and political opposition activists in the country; calls on all stakeholders in Bahrain to initiate constructive and inclusive talks with the aim of genuine reconciliation and respect for the human rights of all Bahraini communities; calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all prisoners of conscience, journalists, human rights defenders and peaceful protesters, and expresses its support for the joint statement of 4 February 2015 by UN Special Procedures mandate holders regarding the arrest of a senior opposition politician and the disbanding of the subsequent demonstrations; calls for the EU Member States and other members of the UNHRC to continue to follow closely the human rights situation in Bahrain, focusing on the implementation of the commitments made by Bahrain during the UPR process and the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, which have been

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welcomed by the King of Bahrain; regrets the lack of progress made by the Government of Bahrain in its cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the UNHRC Special Procedures, and calls on the EU Member States to work towards the adoption during the March session of the UNHRC of a resolution calling for the full implementation of Bahrain's commitments made during the UPR process and the recommendations, including those concerning human rights defenders, of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, and requesting that the OHCHR report on the human rights situation on the ground and on the progress made in Bahrain's cooperation with UN human rights mechanisms;

#### *Egypt*

62. Welcomes the proceedings of the UPR for Egypt in November 2014 and looks forward to its adoption at the upcoming session of the UNHRC; urges Egypt to immediately and unconditionally release all activists and human rights defenders, as well as those detained for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression, assembly and association; demands, also, that the Government of Egypt enact legislation in line with international standards and safeguard the right to association enshrined in the Egyptian Constitution, including the right to receive and dispense funding, and that it revoke the Protest Law of November 2013 and introduce new legislation that would guarantee freedom of assembly; urges the Egyptian Government to open a judicial investigation to determine the identity of those responsible for ordering and carrying out unlawful killings in the course of the suppression of the mainly peaceful demonstrations that have taken place since 3 July 2013, including the dispersals of 14 August 2013 in Raba'a Square and Nahda Square, in which at least 1 000 protesters were killed; urges Egypt to conduct independent, impartial and effective investigations into all human rights violations committed since 2011, including crimes of sexual violence, and to ensure that perpetrators are held to account and victims are provided with an adequate remedy in accordance with international standards; calls on the Egyptian authorities to immediately cancel all death sentences and order retrials that guarantee the right to a fair trial and due process, and to impose an immediate moratorium on death sentences and executions, immediately release all detained journalists and media workers and guarantee the right to freedom of information and expression in accordance with international standards; urges the Egyptian authorities to allow the visit of the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, which has been agreed on in principle, but has been pending since early 2014, and to invite the relevant UN human rights mechanisms and procedures in particular, the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Assembly, the Special Rapporteur on Torture, the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights while Countering Terrorism, and the Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers; calls on the Egyptian authorities to ensure the compliance of domestic law with international human rights standards and to immediately withdraw Law No 136/2014 and put an end to military trials for civilians, as well as cancel all verdicts issued against civilians by military courts and order immediate retrials before civilian courts; calls on the EU and its Member States to support a strong statement on those issues;

#### *Mali*

63. Welcomes the work of the UN Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Mali, and calls on the UNHRC to extend his mandate; welcomes the progress made by the Government of Mali in re-establishing the judiciary in some parts of the country, and in the investigations into the 2012 torture and killing of 21 elite soldiers, together with the establishment of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission; remains concerned about the renewed deterioration of the security situation and the continued use and recruitment of child soldiers, and calls on the Government of Mali to investigate and hold accountable those from all warring factions who were responsible for war violations committed during the 2012-2013 armed conflict; welcomes the peace agreement for all the people of Mali, as they will be the first beneficiaries after months of instability and insecurity, but regrets the delay demanded by the northern rebels; calls on all parties to follow in the footsteps of the Malian Government and immediately sign the agreement, the implementation of which will be monitored by the EU, and to ensure that the future peace agreement calls for accountability, the strengthening of the truth-telling commission and the vetting of security force personnel;

#### *South Sudan*

64. Calls on the African Union to make public the report of its Commission of Inquiry on human rights violations and abuses committed by all parties in South Sudan, as a step toward promoting justice vis-à-vis the human rights violations committed since the start of the conflict; condemns the abduction of a group of young children in Wau Shilluk in February

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2015, with the purpose of making them child soldiers; urges the Human Rights Council to adopt a resolution emphasising that fair and credible investigations and prosecutions of crimes under international law are essential for South Sudan to break a cycle of brutality fuelled by impunity, calling, to this end, for consideration to be given to establishing a hybrid judicial mechanism and further urging South Sudan to accede to the Rome Statute, and to establish a mandate of Special Rapporteur for South Sudan, in order to help promote fair and credible prosecutions and broader accountability measures, with the support of the international community;

#### *Sri Lanka*

65. Notes the pledges made by the newly elected Government of Sri Lanka, and calls on it to take concrete steps towards accountability between now and the 30<sup>th</sup> session of the UNHRC in September 2015 with a view to acting on its promises to improve the human rights situation in the country and to prevent backsliding, including serious investigations and prosecutions, together with other steps to address the wider problem of impunity and human rights abuses, and to cooperate fully with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and its international investigation concerning Sri Lanka;

#### *Syria*

66. Expresses grave concern over the dramatic and violent conflict and the humanitarian crisis that has come as a result of the use of violence, first and foremost by the Assad regime, but also by the Islamic State/Da'esh and other militia against civilians, especially vulnerable groups such as women and children; expresses its concern at the fact that Da'esh is exporting its ideology abroad; is very concerned by the systematic violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in Syria, which may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity; urges all parties to comply with applicable international humanitarian law in order to protect civilians, respect their human rights and meet their basic needs; urges all UN member states to speak out clearly against the violence and in particular in favour of the rights of minorities, including the systematic persecution of Christians; calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all persons who have been arbitrarily detained or abducted as a result of the exercise of their human rights or other peaceful political activities; requests strong support from the EU and its Member States for accountability and the renewal of the UN Commission of Inquiry;

#### *Iraq*

67. Expresses its grave concern over dramatic and violent conflict and the humanitarian crisis in Iraq; notes that the human rights situation is deteriorating as IS/Da'esh and other militia conduct abductions and mass executions, and persecution of Iraq's ethnic and religious minorities, including Christians;

#### *Palestine/Israel*

68. Condemns the rocket attacks on Israel from the Gaza Strip by Hamas and other armed groups, and expresses serious concerns about the humanitarian crisis in Gaza; calls on the EU and its Member States to publicly express support for the UN Commission of Inquiry (CoI) and to denounce the lack of cooperation and access granted by the Israeli authorities to the CoI, through a public statement at the HRC; stresses that justice and respect for the rule of law are the indispensable bases for peace, and stresses that prevailing long-standing and systemic impunity for international law violations must cease; welcomes the opening by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) of a preliminary examination into the situation in Palestine; calls on the EU to fully cooperate with the ICC Office of the Prosecutor; calls on the EU to re-engage with Item 7 of HRC and to strongly condemn the prolonged violations of international law and the lack of implementation of the advisory opinion by the International Court of Justice, and to support the renewal of the mandate of the CoI;

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**Thursday 12 March 2015**

69. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the EU Special Representative on Human Rights, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the UN Security Council, the UN Secretary-General, the President of the 69th UN General Assembly, the President of the UN Human Rights Council and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

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