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The special procedures of the Human Rights Council are independent human rights experts with mandates to report and advise on human rights. The system of Special Procedures covers all human rights: civil, cultural, economic, political, and social. There are currently 44 thematic and 12 country mandates. These experts send communications to States in which they bring alleged violations or abuses to their attention.

Between 1 March to 31 May 2017, these experts have sent 23 communications to 14 Latin American and Caribbean States. The States have replied to 11 communications. Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, Haiti and Colombia did not reply to any of the communications sent by the experts.
The main issue in these communications is the situation of human rights defenders which is the core subject of 14 communications sent by the experts during the Session 36 of the Human Rights Council. The second concern is freedom of opinion and expression, as it has been raised in 12 communications. Executions and issues related to the exercise of freedom of peaceful assembly and association are also of main importance as they are mentioned in 9 communications each. Other recurrent themes in the communications sent by the experts are violence against women, environmental issues, disappearances, business, and indigenous peoples.
ARGENTINA

Criminalization of peaceful opposition in public spaces in Argentina: ¹

On 18 January 2016, the executive power of the Province of Jujuy passed the Decreto 403-G-16, according to which, the protests happening in Plaza Belgrano de San Salvador de Jujuy were an abusive exercise of rights. Thus, the Decree ordered the immediate suspension of the legal personality of the organisations still present in that location. Between the 23 and 29 December 2016, legal proceedings were initiated against Ms Milagro Sala and the organisation Tupac Amaru, concerning their camping in Plaza Belgrano de San Salvador de Jujuy between December 2015 and February 2016.

The experts have expressed their concern about the prohibition of the protest in Plaza de San Salvador de Jujuy, the withdrawal of the legal personality of the organisation Barrial Tupac Amaru, and the instruction of proceedings against them, and have declared that using a criminal law to sanction actions of peaceful opposition is highly worrying.

The experts have also declared that the Código contravencional of the province of Jujuy does not comply with international standards regarding freedom of peaceful reunion and association, as it significantly limits the exercise of public protest. Furthermore, the fact that its implementation is controlled by the executive power raises concern about the impartiality and independence of such measures.

Argentina replied to this communication on 2 June, and then on 22 June 2017.

¹ ARG 2/2017, 05 Apr 2017, Special Rapporteurs on freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of peaceful assembly and of association
BRAZIL

A Draft Bill limiting environmental protection and the rights of indigenous peoples and peoples of African Descent in Brazil:

The Congressional Investigative Commission (CPI) issued a report, which investigates the National Indian Foundation (Funai) and the National Institute of Colonization and Agrarian Reform (Inca). The CPI was created and is led by agricultural landowner groups. Concerns on the impartiality of the process have been raised. Indeed, the report includes 103 investigations and accusations against 70 individuals for crimes allegedly committed in processes of demarcation of indigenous lands. The investigations targeted 33 indigenous leaders, peoples linked to indigenous organisations, and leaders of NGOs or human rights defenders. However, the report mentions nothing about ruralists even when indigenous peoples have been killed.

In light of the above, serious concern has been expressed with regard to the lack of impartiality of the CPI, which seems to seek to undermine the rights of indigenous peoples, and contributes to the current discrimination against them. Furthermore, this report intensifies the process of criminalization of indigenous leaders and human rights defenders for their work. This report could also have very negative consequences on the future demarcation procedures, and already demarcated lands.

The accusations against the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples contained in the report, along with the series of attacks against indigenous peoples following her visits to Brazil are highly worrying, according to the experts.

Furthermore, the draft bill to establish the General Environmental Licensing Law (Substitute Bill No. 3729) reduces environmental protection measures and the rights of indigenous peoples and people of African descent in Brazil. Concern is expressed regarding the reduced environmental protection the proposed draft laws will have on indigenous peoples and peoples of African descent.

The State did not reply to this communication.

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2 BRA 5/2017, 30 May 2017, Special Rapporteurs on the Environment, Human rights defenders, Indigenous peoples
The “Escola sem Partido” (School Without Party) Programme restricting the right to freedom of expression of students and teachers in Brazil: ³

Two Projects of Law (PL), PL 867/2015 and PL 193/2016, called the federal “School Without Party” Programme bills, contain provisions that unduly restrict the right to freedom of expression of students and teachers in Brazil.

The “School Without Party” Movement was initiated in 2004, the movement endeavours to ensure neutrality in primary and secondary schools across Brazil by discouraging instructors from “ideological indoctrination”. This was introduced in 2014 in a State Bill presented to the State Legislative Assembly of Rio de Janeiro. Since then, the movement has been introduced through municipal, state and federal bills.

NGOs, experts, educators, students as well as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights have denounced these bills, arguing that they supress teacher’s ability to provide to students a well-rounded education, reflective of a complex and diverse society and students’ ability to learn and discuss societal issues in the classroom. The main issue is that the bill prevents discussion of gender and sexual diversity, which is fundamental to prevent gender stereotypes and homophobic attitudes among students. Furthermore, it prevents the development of critical thinking and the ability to reflect, agree or disagree, as well as the discussion of certain topics that can be considered as controversial or sensitive, such as diversity and minority rights.

The State replied to this communication on 12 June 2017.

The negative impacts on the realization of economic and social rights in Brazil of the Constitutional Amendment EC-95: ⁴

The Constitutional amendment EC-95 has all the characteristics of a deliberately retrogressive measure, as current total federal spending levels remain in place for the next years, only to be corrected for inflation. According to the experts, the spending cap will undoubtedly result in retrogression and a negative impact with regard to the realization of economic and social rights in Brazil.

If the realization of economic and social rights is reliant on public expenditure, and the size of the total public budget is not allowed to grow for the next 20 years, it is virtually inevitable that the progressive realization of economic and social rights become impossible. Only exceptional circumstances, such as a sudden and significant decrease in the size of the population or the complete elimination of the budget for non-social spending would allow for progressive realization of these rights.

In this case, it is clear that the country has been experiencing a severe economic and fiscal crisis and thus can take measures to address this crisis. However, the measure has to be necessary and proportionate in light of Brazil’s current economic and fiscal crisis.

³ BRA 4/2017, 13 Apr 2017 Special Rapporteurs on Education, Freedom of opinion and expression, Religion or belief
⁴ BRA 3/2017, 23 Mar 2017, Special Rapporteurs on education, poverty
The government did not fulfil the requirement to give full consideration to all alternative measures and to demonstrate that EC-95 was the most suitable measure in the circumstance to safeguard economic, social and cultural rights of the Brazilian population.

Many Brazilians have expressed concerns that the government did not allow sufficient time for the amendment to be thoroughly debated by all stakeholders and to carry out a proper impact assessment of the amendment.

Brazil did not reply to the communication.
COLOMBIA

The need to create an independent and effective unity in charge of looking for disappeared persons in the context of the peace process in Colombia:

The draft law regarding a unit’s creation in charge of looking for disappeared persons in the context of the armed conflict, in the framework of the system of integral truth, justice, reparation and no repetition, is currently being debated at the Congress. The system will be composed of the Comisión para el Esclarecimiento de la Verdad, la Convivencia y la No Repetición; la Unidad para la Búsqueda de Personas dadas por Desaparecidas en el contexto y en razón del conflicto armado (UBPD); the Jurisdicción Especial para la Paz; y las medidas de reparación integral.

Currently, the State response has not been adequate to the gravity of the circumstances, as the State lacks an entity with the competence of looking for, identifying, and delivering with dignity the bodies of the victims of forced disappearances. Indeed, the CBPD (Comisión Nacional de Busqueda de personas desaparecidas) lacks autonomy, independence and institutional capacity.

The creation of the UBPD is an opportunity to overcome the issues faced by the CBPD. It must be an autonomous and independent entity, not subordinated to any other entities.

Colombia did not reply to these allegations.

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5 COL 1/2017, 08 Mar 2017, Special Rapporteurs on disappearances, truth justice reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence
The current situation of violence against LGBTI people in El Salvador: 6

On 19 February 2017, two transsexual women were found dead in the city of San Luis Talpa, in El Salvador. Their bodies presented signs of torture and bullets impacts. On 21 February, one day after she went to the funeral of the two women deceased, another transsexual woman was found dead, with bullet impacts in her head. It is alleged that she knew the identity of the killers of the two previous victims and was killed to prevent her from revealing their identity.

Furthermore, a human rights defender belonging to the transsexual community received death threats and suffered two murder attempts. This situation obliged her to run away from her hometown.

The situation in El Salvador is highly worrying as transsexual women are being constantly targeted by death threats, or even murder attempts. Gang members have expressed their will to kill all transsexuals in El Salvador. This general environment of fear has forced transsexual people of El Salvador to either hide or flee the country to protect their own life.

The State replied to this communication on 21 July 2017.

Attacks and death threats against women human rights defenders in El Salvador: 7

An anonymous woman human rights defender received several threats because of her work as lawyer and human rights defender; she was the director of ASDEHU (Asociación Salvadoreña por los Derechos Humanos), and was in charge of documenting cases of human rights violations committed by the State and the gangs known as “maras”, as well as cases of enforced disappearances. She was forced to leave her position at ASDEHU as a result of the death threats she received.

Several death threats she received were from police officers. Her family members have also been victims of threats, harassment and assault.

Faced with this situation, she has decided to get out of the country to ensure her safety. Her friends and family are still receiving phone calls or visits of people trying to know her whereabouts.

The State replied to this communication on 22 May 2017.

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6 SLV 2/2017, 26 May 2017, Special Rapporteurs on women in law and in practice, human rights defenders, violence against women, sexual orientation and gender identity, executions, freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of peaceful assembly and of association
7 SLV 1/2017, 16 Mar 2017, Special Rapporteurs on disappearances, human rights defenders
GUATEMALA

A human rights defender and environmental activist threatened and intimidated for his active participation in denouncing abuses committed by mining businesses in Guatemala: ⁸

Mr Maldonado Flores is an environmental lawyer in Guatemala and director of Centro de Acción Legal-Ambiental y Social de Guatemala (CALAS). He has litigated cases regarding criminalization and attacks against human rights defenders, and has accompanied different indigenous communities affected by mining projects, regarding the legality of granting concessions and promoting the right to a healthy environment and access to water. He was granted protection measures, however these have been insufficient – indeed some unidentified men have shot at a car parked outside of his house.

These acts happen in a broader context of threats and attacks perpetrated against him, and other members of CALAS recently, who have been the object of previous communications, to which the State did not reply. These attacks are linked to their activities of defence of human rights and environmental protection. Most threats are related to their active participation in the denouncing human rights abuses committed by mining businesses in the region, such as Tahoe Resources Inc. and its subsidiary, Minera San Rafael S.A.

Guatemala replied to this communication on 30 June 2017.

A fire caused the death of 40 girls in Hogar Seguro Virgen de la Asunción in Guatemala, despite several warnings on the bad conditions of the refuge: ⁹

On 8 March 2017, 40 girls died and dozens were injured during a fire in the Hogar Seguro Virgen de la Asuncion, in San José de Pinula. While the cause of the fire is still under investigation, it is alleged that the minors locked in a room set fire to some mattresses as a sign of protest.

According to the experts, this tragedy could have been avoided if the State had complied with its obligations regarding the protection of children, and had listened to the various warnings emitted by national and international instances regarding the bad conditions of the young girls’ shelter. For the past years, the shelter has been highly criticised for allegations of disappearances, abuse, violence – including sexual violence – against girls and boys, bad conditions of hygiene, and overcrowding.

Guatemala replied to this communication on 1 June 2017.

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⁸ GTM 3/2017, 17 May 2017, Special Rapporteurs on business environment freedom of opinion and expression human rights defenders independence of judges and lawyers

⁹ GTM 2/2017, 23 Mar 2017, Special Rapporteurs on disability executions sale of children trafficking in persons violence against women, women in law and in practice
HAITI

Lack of access to food and adequate health services causes the death of 113 prisoners: 10

In 2015, 104 prisoners died while in detention in Haiti. In 2016 the number of deaths in detention is of 113. The majority of deaths are related to the aggravation of detention conditions and as a consequence of malnutrition.

In Haiti, official prisons experience an overcrowding of 644%. Furthermore, while 70% of the detainees are in preventive detention, they remain incarcerated for an average of 3 years.

The main issue in these prisons is malnutrition: the prisoners only receive one meal per day in most prisons. Aside from the issues linked to lack of food and medical assistance, the authorities also prohibited during several months the visits to prisoners, depriving them from receiving food as well as moral and material support from their families.

Haiti did not reply to this communication.

10 HTI 3/2017, 16 Mar 2017, Special Rapporteurs on executions, food, health, torture, Haiti
Climate of violence against human rights defenders and ineffectiveness of the State protection in Honduras:

Several irregularities occurred during the investigations in the criminal judgements related to the murder in March 2016 of human rights defender Ms Berta Cáceres. Furthermore, several members of the Consejo Cívico de Organizaciones Populares e indígenas de Honduras (COPINH) and of other organisations defending human rights have been attacked since the beginning of the year.

COPINH, an indigenous organisation promoting environmental protection and indigenous people’s rights, has been a key actor in denouncing the violations related to the hydroelectric project Agua Zarca in Santa Bárbara and Intibucá. Ms Berta Cáceres, cofounder of the COPINH, was assassinated in March 2016 because of her activism against the project. This has been the object of previous communications, to which the State has not fully replied to.

There have been allegations of irregularities in the investigation of her death. The magistrate in charge of this case was intercepted by two men who stole the case-file. The authorities have yet to give any information on the measures taken to investigate this event.

Furthermore, the lawyer of the victim was denied access to proof, allegedly because of IT problems. Moreover, there are possible conflicts of interest in this investigation: a number of the accused are former members of intelligence services in Honduras, which could cause pressure on the prosecutors in charge of the case.

Furthermore, COPINH and other human rights organisations have been victims of a campaign of defamation in social media: they have been accused of lying and of defamation in order to discredit Honduras in the international scene.

Since the death of Ms Cáceres at least seven human rights and environment defenders have been killed in the country, which raises concern on the effectiveness of the commitment undertaken by Honduras to protect the activities of human rights defenders.

Honduras did not reply to this communication.

The prohibition and criminalisation of abortion in the criminal code reform in Honduras:

There is currently a reform project of the criminal code, which would criminalize abortion – in spite of international recommendations to not criminalise it – and sanction women who underwent the procedure with up to 6 years of imprisonment.

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11 HND 4/2017, 17 May 2017, Special Rapporteurs on business, environment, executions, freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, human rights defenders, indigenous peoples

12 HND 1/2017, 25 Apr 2017, Special Rapporteurs on health, violence against women, women in law and in practice
Currently, the criminal code contains a general prohibition of abortion including when the life or health of the woman is at risk, in cases of rape or incest, or when the foetus is not viable. Furthermore, the distribution and commercialization of the emergency pill has been prohibited since 2009.

These limitations can contribute to perpetuating or increasing unsafe abortions, which particularly affect women in situations of poverty and social exclusion. Furthermore, the WHO has established that the criminalisation of abortion does not reduce abortion rates; on the contrary, it increases the number of women having recourse to clandestine and dangerous solutions.

Honduras replied to this communication on 15 June 2017.

Threats and attacks against several members of Radios for their journalistic work on environmental defenders’ movements, and indigenous communities’ rights movements in Honduras: 13

There has been a series of threats and attacks against Radio Progreso, Radio Dignidad and Radio La Voz Lenca, and against its members, for their journalistic work on the environmental defenders’ movements, and indigenous communities’ rights movements in Honduras.

Mr Esteban Vásquez, an indigenous human rights defender, and Mr Ismael Moreno both members of the Radio Progreso, and other staff members of the Radio Dignidad, have received threats and intimidations. Attacks were also directed against Radio La Voz Lenca’s buildings. All the attacks and threats are related with their work denouncing corruption cases regarding mining projects and informing on the rights of indigenous communities over their lands.

Honduras did not reply to this communication.

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13 HND 2/2017, 09 May 2017, Special Rapporteurs on environment, freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, human rights defenders, indigenous peoples
MEXICO

The murder of Ms Miriam Elizabeth Rodríguez, human rights defender and mother of a disappeared young girl: 14

Ms Miriam Elizabeth Rodríguez Martínez, was a representative of the Comunidad Ciudadana en Búsqueda de Desaparecidos de San Fernando, in Tamaulipas. She investigated her daughter’s disappearance until she found skeletal remains belonging to her daughter in a house used for organised crime. Months later, she has put forth evidence to the authorities on the identity of the responsible for the murder of her daughter. Several people belonging to a group of organised crime have been arrested.

In March 2017, two people related to the abduction and murder of her daughter escaped from centre they were detained in.

At that moment, she requested to be granted protection measures, which were not fully implemented. On 10 March, armed men went to her house and shot her. She died while being brought the hospital.

Mexico did not reply to this communication.

The murder of a journalist for her investigations on the funding of electoral campaigns from criminal groups, in Mexico: 15

Ms Miroslava Breach Velducea worked for 27 years as a journalist. Her work was particularly focused on issues such as mining industries and related social conflict, femicides, persecution of human rights defenders and more recently the relation between politics and organised crime.

In March 2017, she was murdered because of the investigations she was carrying out on the funding of electoral municipal campaigns by criminal groups linked with drug trafficking.

That same month, at least two other journalists have been killed in Mexico, and two others were victims attempted murder. The cause of such attacks was their journalistic activities.

All these facts happen in a broader context of systematic attacks directed at journalists denouncing the persecution of human rights defenders, and raise serious concern on the free exercise of journalism in the country and impunity of perpetrators of such attacks.

Mexico did not reply to this communication.

14 MEX 3/2017, 18 May 2017, Special Rapporteurs on disappearances, executions, human rights defenders, violence against women
15 MEX 2/2017, 10 Apr 2017, Special Rapporteurs on executions, freedom of opinion and expression, human rights defenders, violence against women
NICARAGUA

Several women intimidated and threatened in Nicaragua because of their work as human rights defenders: 16

Four women human rights defenders were victims of intimidation, defamation and threats directed against them or their family members, in relation with their work as human rights defenders in Nicaragua.

Ms Lottie Cunningham Wren is a lawyer and founder of CEDHJUCAN, Ms Juana Bilbano is the director of the same organisation whose mandate is the promotion of human rights, with a focus on indigenous peoples and peoples of African descent in the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua. The members of CEJUDHCAN benefit from protection measures ordered by the Inter-American Commission on 8 August 2016.

Ms Vilma Núñez de Escorcia is the founder and president of the CENIDH, an organisation providing legal support to indigenous and Afro-descendant communities affected by the construction of the interoceanic canal. She was granted protection measures from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ordered on November 2008.

Ms Francisca Ramírez is the coordinator of the CDTLS, a social movement opposing the construction of the same canal. The aim of the movement is to defend peasant and indigenous communities’ rights, including the respect of the right to previous, free, and informed consent.

These four women have been victims of intimidation, defamation, violence and threats, even death threats, which are directly linked to the carrying out of their peaceful work of protection of human rights.

The broader national context of intimidation and harassment suffered by human rights defenders because of their work denouncing abuses is highly worrying.

Nicaragua replied to these allegations on 2 June 2017.

16 NIC 1/2017, 18 May 2017, Special Rapporteurs on business, environment, executions, freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, human rights defenders, violence against women
PANAMA

Restrictions to freedom of association and expression under the Executive Decree N°62, which regulated the non-profit foundations, and associations in Panama: 17

The Executive Decree N°62 of 30 March 2017 regulates the associations and non-profit foundations. The disposions regarding the granting of legal personality, registrar, statutes, supervision of the operations and funding are disproportionately expensive, complex, ambiguous in its application, and discretionary for the authorities, which are in charge of the implementation.

The experts have urged the State to abstain from creating obstacles to the enjoyment of freedom of association, and that they guarantee to the members of associations the possibility to determine freely their statutes, structures and activities.

According to the experts, the suspension and dissolution of associations are the most severe form of restriction of freedom of association and should only be taken when there is a clear and imminent risk of violation of national legislation. The suspension and dissolution must be strictly proportional to their legitimate objective and used only when less severe measures are insufficient.

Panama replied to this communication on the 25 July 2017.

17 PAN 1/2017, 22 May 2017, Special Rapporteurs on freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, human rights defenders
PERU

A human rights defender and his spouse threatened and attacked in Peru for denouncing human rights violations and environmental harm linked with gold mining projects: 18

Mr Estrada Chuquilin is a journalist, he is a member of the Red de Comunicadores indígenas del Perú (REDCIP), and of Rondas Campesinas de la Provincia de Cajamarca.

He has denounced human rights violations – such as forced evictions or harassment – and environmental harm linked to gold mining.

While he was granted protection measures in 2014, these are not fully efficient as he has been victim of new acts of harassment, threats, and attacks since then. His wife was also victim of an attack.

Furthermore, he is currently being criminally charged in relation to his actions as a human rights defender and journalist, and to his participation in the movement of opposition to the development of the mining project in Cajamarca. The instruction has been delayed several times, putting him in a situation of legal uncertainty and vulnerability as the oral audience was supposed to start in 2015 and still did not take place.

Peru did not reply to this communication.

The setbacks regarding the prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender under the Legislative Decree N°1323 in Peru: 19

The Legislative Decree N°1323 was approved by the executive power in January 2017, according to the competences delegated under the Law N°30506.

There is currently a highly worrying proposition to derogate from Article 1 of the Decree. This article ensures that sexual orientation and gender identity constitute prohibited motives of discrimination, and aggravating circumstances in criminal liability. This disposition constitutes a progress in the fight against discrimination and eradication of violence against people with diverse sexual orientation and gender identity, and a signal that the State is willing to improve the situation of human rights.

The number murders of LGBTI people in Peru is highly worrying, thus the possibility to derogate from Article 1 would constitute a serious setback in the protection of this community in Peru.

Peru did not reply to this communication.

18 PER 2/2017, 11 Apr 2017, Special Rapporteurs on freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, human rights defenders, environment, business

19 PER 3/2017, 10 Apr 2017, Special Rapporteur on sexual orientation and gender identity
Confiscation of passport, denial of exit and threats of deportation to Cuba by Trinidad and Tobago authorities of a journalist and human rights defender seeking to escape persecution by Cuban authorities for expressing dissident opinions: 20

Mr Eduardo E. Herrera is a Cuban surgeon, journalist, and human rights defender who has expressed dissident opinions through the online media agency Hablemos Press where he has expressed critical views on Cuban politics and in particular on the Cuban health system. For this reason, he was allegedly harassed at his work place at the Calixto García hospital in La Havana, and was ultimately forced to resign and flee Cuba.

On October 2016, Mr Herrera arrived in Port of Spain’s airport via Santa Lucia, with the sole intention of connecting to a flight that would take him to Guyana on that same day. However, he was prevented from boarding the plane by the personnel of Caribbean Airlines. He was then taken to an immigration office where the authorities of Trinidad and Tobago confiscated his passport, without presenting any document stating the legal reasons for doing so. Allegedly, he was told that they would return his passport if he agreed to be sent back to Cuba, which he refused, claiming persecution by his government.

Mr Herrera has filed an asylum claim before the representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Trinidad and Tobago, whose decision is still pending. During his time in Trinidad and Tobago, employers have repeatedly refused to consider his applications in view of the absence of any official ID or work permit, and he has been rejected by employers in the health sector due to a policy of not hiring Cuban doctors that arrive in Trinidad and Tobago by their own means, independently of the agreements of medical assistance between Trinidad and Tobago and Cuba.

Grave concern is expressed at the possibility that Mr Herrera will be deported back to Cuba, which would place him again at risk of persecution considering prior persecution by Cuban authorities against him for his human rights activities, including as a human rights defender, and the exercise of his right to freedom of expression.

The State did not reply to this communication.

20 TTO 1/2017, 06 Apr 2017, Special Rapporteurs on freedom of opinion and expression, human rights defenders, migrants
URUGUAY

Death threats received by several human rights defenders invested in the promotion of human rights and fight against impunity in Uruguay: 21

Mr Pablo Chargoña is a lawyer and human rights defender, specially focused on human rights violations committed during the dictatorship in Uruguay, he has provided legal representation to victims and advocates for the democratization of the access to information regarding these crimes.

Mr Louis Joinet is a human rights defender and French magistrate; he has fought against impunity regarding human rights violations.

In February 2017, both received death threats by e-mail from Comando Barneix, an anonymous group composed of former high-ranking officials in Uruguay. These threats are related to their actions against the impunity of crimes committed by the Uruguayan military during the dictatorship. Furthermore, the threat also targeted 11 public servants, lawyers and activists all promoting human rights and fighting impunity in Uruguay.

The experts have urged the State to investigate these allegations, and to identify and sanction those responsible. They also exhorted the State to take all measures to guarantee the safety and integrity of the threatened persons.

The lack of cooperation of military institutions in the framework of investigations of violations of human rights committed during the dictatorship is highly worrying for the promotion of truth, justice, reparations and guarantee of non-repetition.

Uruguay acknowledged these allegations however did not provide an actual reply to the allegations on 3 July 2017.

21 URY 1/2017, 08 May 2017, Special Rapporteurs on executions, freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, human rights defenders, truth justice reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence, disappearances
VENEZUELA

Excessive use of force and criminalization of protests in Venezuela, after the Decree No. 2.323 of “Estado de Excepción y Emergencia Económica” : 22

The excessive use of force during protests in Venezuela in April 2017 has caused the death of 20 persons, and hundreds of injured. More than 850 people have also been detained during such protests. The police have used teargas grenades during the protests. Furthermore, several cases of torture or inhuman, cruel or degrading treatment have been reported against detainees committed by the Bolivarian intelligence services.

The implementation of the Plan Estratégico Especial Cívico-Militar Zamora, is quite alarming as it institutionalized a military response to protests.

Furthermore, the criminalization of protests in the countries, and the government’s discourse towards protesters and political activists raise concern as they highly restrict the enjoyment of right to freedom of expression and peaceful association, and reduce the impact of the work of the civil society.

The State replied to this communication on 10 July 2017.

Detention of several journalists covering the protests in Venezuela and censorship of several Internet platforms of information in Venezuela: 23

Several journalists covering the protests in Venezuela have been detained by security forces. Braulio Jatar and Yonathan Guédez have been detained for diffusing information on protests through online media.

Furthermore, the State has censored several information platforms of importance for the country, particularly through blocking these Internet platforms. Three on-line platforms offering news and information of public interest have been blocked. These platforms diffused information on the protests.

According to the experts - since the government controls a large part of television and radio services - the continuity of these Internet platforms is vital for the diffusion of information on the protest for the free manifestation of ideas.

Venezuela did not reply to this communication.

22 VEN 2/2017, 26 Apr 2017, Special Rapporteurs on arbitrary Detention, freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, human rights defenders, executions
23 VEN 1/2017, 24 Apr 2017, Special Rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression