

**UN Human Rights Committee publishes findings on
Brazil, Burundi, Colombia, Cyprus, Lesotho, State of
Palestine and Uganda
26 July 2023**

GENEVA (26 July 2023) – The [UN Human Rights Committee](#) today issued its findings on Brazil, Burundi, Colombia, Cyprus, Lesotho, the State of Palestine and Uganda, after examining the seven States parties in its latest session.

The findings contain the Committee's main concerns and recommendations on the implementation of the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#), as well as positive aspects. Highlights include:

Brazil

The Committee was concerned about racial profiling and the lack of accountability for excessive use of force and extrajudicial killings by law enforcement officers. It called upon Brazil to redouble its efforts to investigate all such allegations, prosecute perpetrators and compensate victims, including cases relating to the Complexo da Maré neighbourhood raid and the police operations in Jacarezinho and Vila Cruzeiro.

The Committee expressed concern over the lack of an effective land demarcation process, which has led to growing land conflicts, illegal encroachment and resource exploitation, as well as attacks and killings of indigenous peoples. The Committee also raised concern about the Temporal Landmark that limits indigenous peoples' recognition of ancestral land only to territories they occupied on the Constitution promulgation date in 1988. It regretted the slow pace of land titling for Quilombola communities and urged Brazil to expedite the demarcation and titling of indigenous and Quilombola lands, particularly by upholding indigenous peoples' entitlement to the lands they have traditionally owned or occupied.

Burundi

The Committee regretted the Burundi delegation's [withdrawal from the meeting](#) in the presence of certain human rights activists. The Committee proceeded to review Burundi in the absence of the delegation. It was

alarmed by reports of arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, extrajudicial executions, torture and sexual violence committed by members of the National Intelligence Service, police, security forces and members of Imbonerakure, the ruling party's youth league, against political opponents. The Committee noted that the situation was intensified during the 2015 demonstrations, the 2018 constitutional referendum and the 2020 elections. It urged Burundi to take all measures to combat impunity and ensure that all these violations are promptly and thoroughly investigated and that those responsible are prosecuted and sentenced to penalties commensurate with the seriousness of the offence.

The Committee was also alarmed by political violence and incitement to political and ethnic hatred by State agents and members of the Imbonerakure, targeting opposition candidates, human rights defenders and journalists, during and after the 2015 and 2020 elections and the 2018 constitutional referendum. It recommended that Burundi take all necessary steps to prevent such violence and intimidation before the elections of 2025 and 2027, guarantee electoral rights to all, including opposition candidates and supporters, and ensure that all political parties can conduct a free and equal electoral campaign.

Colombia

Concerning the rise in violence during internal armed conflict due to the expansion of non-State armed groups and criminal organisations, the Committee underlined the need to strengthen actions against impunity for such crimes, particularly those occurring in rural areas. It asked the State party to intensify efforts to implement the 2016 Peace Agreement, investigate all rights violations before the Attorney General's Office and the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, and continue the dialogue with non-state armed groups on immediate action to reduce violence and mitigate its impacts.

The Committee remained concerned about the frequent attacks on human rights defenders and social leaders and the high level of impunity in these cases. It called upon Colombia to enact a national policy to protect human rights defenders, including those advocating environmental rights and the rights of indigenous and Afro-descendant people, social and community leaders, and journalists who face threats, violence and intimidation, and to guarantee that they can carry out their activities in safe conditions.

Cyprus

The Committee voiced concern over continued overcrowding, poor material conditions in detention facilities and the fact that migrants awaiting deportation orders are held alongside detainees charged with criminal offences. It asked Cyprus to improve detention conditions and alleviate overcrowding. The Committee also recommended that Cyprus enforce statutory limits to pretrial detention duration and guarantee that people awaiting deportation are detained for the shortest possible period, and that pretrial detainees are kept apart from convicted prisoners.

Regarding the rights of minorities, the Committee mentioned the small number of Turkish Cypriots in the State party's civil service, including the police force and the courts, and that no specific policies aimed at changing this situation were planned. It recommended that Cyprus continue its efforts to eradicate the economic, social, linguistic and cultural barriers faced by Turkish Cypriots and other minorities, including taking specific measures to integrate Turkish Cypriots into the civil service and the judiciary.

Lesotho

The Committee noted with grave concern the high degree of violence against women and girls, including domestic violence and child marriage. The Committee was also concerned that victims are mostly reluctant to report these incidents for fear of stigmatisation or losing financial support. The Committee called upon Lesotho to investigate all such abuses and encourage women and girls to report domestic and sexual violence. It also asked Lesotho to expand shelters nationwide and provide adequate free legal aid to those in need.

Following the killing of a student by the Police at the National University of Lesotho during a student demonstration in June 2022 and the shooting of a factory worker during strike protests in 2021, the Committee raised the alarm about the use of live ammunition and excessive force by law enforcement officers in dispersing demonstrations. It was also concerned about the lack of effective investigations and prosecutions into these cases. The Committee urged Lesotho to ensure that allegations of excessive use of force during peaceful assemblies are thoroughly investigated, that responsible officers are prosecuted and that victims are compensated.

State of Palestine

The Committee was concerned that domestic violence, including marital rape, is still not explicitly criminalised in national legislation. The Committee was further alarmed by reports that women are pressured by their families, often through violence, torture or threats, to commit suicide to protect the so-called family's "honour". It urged the State party to adopt and enforce a comprehensive law criminalising all violence against girls and women, explicitly addressing domestic violence, marital rape and crimes committed in the name of so-called "honour".

The Committee expressed concern over the Presidential Decree issued in April 2021 that postponed parliamentary and presidential elections. It was also concerned about cases of attacks, arbitrary arrests and detention, and killings of opposition candidates and politicians in the West Bank earlier that year before the postponement of the elections. It called on the State party to review the legal and institutional framework governing the holding of elections to ensure that the delay of elections is in line with the Covenant. The Committee also requested that the State of Palestine take all necessary measures to prevent intimidation, assault, arbitrary arrests and killings of opposition candidates, and ensure that such cases are promptly investigated.

Uganda

The Committee expressed deep concern about discrimination and persecution based on sexual orientation and gender identity, including the enactment of the Anti-Homosexuality Act in May 2023, which criminalises consenting sexual relations between adults of the same sex and provides severe sanctions, including the death penalty, for related 'offences.' The Committee urged Uganda to repeal the Act urgently, address the stigmatisation based on sexual orientation or gender identity and ensure remedies for victims.

The Committee also raised concern about persistent reports of arbitrary arrest and detention of political opponents, journalists, lawyers and human rights defenders, violating fundamental procedural safeguards. It was also concerned by the high proportion of the prison population in pretrial detention. The Committee called on Uganda to ensure that fundamental procedural safeguards are respected and that statutory limits to the duration of pretrial detention are strictly enforced.

A review of Somalia was also scheduled for this session but was postponed at the last minute.

The above findings, officially known as Concluding Observations, are available on the [session page](#).

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Background:

The [Human Rights Committee](#) monitors States parties' compliance with the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#), which to date has been ratified by [173 States parties](#). The Committee is made up of [18 members](#) who are independent human rights experts drawn from around the world, who serve in their personal capacity and not as representatives of States parties.