Beat: News

Haiti Crisis in Spotlight

UN Human Rights Council Session

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ARAC International Strategic Communications - Haiti crisis in spotlight, as top human rights body wraps marathon session.

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UN NEWS PRESS RELEASE: HAITI CRISIS IN SPOTLIGHT

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The UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution on Tuesday calling for the appointment of an independent rights expert on Haiti, amid mounting concern over deadly gang violence engulfing the country, threatening livelihoods, and pushing half the population into hunger.

An independent expert mandate on Haiti had been created by the Council in 1995 but then discontinued in 2017.

Country-specific abuses

As a subsidiary body of the UN General Assembly, the Council examines human rights violations in specific countries as part of its standing agenda. The forum voted on Tuesday to adopt resolutions on human rights in Iran, Belarus, Syria and Ukraine.

Resolutions on human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, more commonly known as North Korea, and in Myanmar, were adopted without a vote.

Momentum for the environment

On Tuesday, the Council also agreed to strengthen the international consensus around the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

The proposal, which passed without a vote, called on States to guarantee respect for human rights when addressing environmental challenges, protect environmental activists and provide access to justice, "including to an effective remedy", on green issues.

While resolutions on the environment have been adopted by the 47-member body in the past, the latest text builds on two landmark resolutions agreed by the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly in 2021 and 2022, enshrining the universal right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment for the first time.

Just last week, in another historic decision, the UN General Assembly called on the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to rule on countries' legal obligations related to climate change, building global momentum towards a legal basis for climate justice.

Over 40 resolutions

Poised to wrap up a marathon five-and-a-half-week session on Tuesday, the Council's 47 Member States prepared to take action on a total of 43 resolutions.

On Monday, it notably voted to extend the mandate of the three-member Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan for a further period of one year. The vote came on the same day as the publication of the Commission's most recent report decrying the glaring impunity for horrific ongoing violations against civilians.

The Council also voted for a two-year renewal of the mandate of the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua created in 2022. The three experts warnedearlier this month that Nicaragua's government was committing crimes against humanity as part of its crackdown on political dissent.

Consensus and dialogue

Mandates on human rights defenders, minority issues, torture, freedom of opinion and expression, adequate housing, migrants, as well as the sale, sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, were all renewed by consensus.

At the start of the Council's current session on 28 February, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, urged the Council's members meeting in the 75th anniversary year of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), to overcome differences "through solidarity and genuine dialogue, working across geopolitical divides with a clear vision to advance the needs of every country and the rights of all".

A "willingness to engage in genuine dialogue – a desire to seek common denominators, even in the midst of fierce disagreements – is, I believe, core to our common language", Mr. Türk insisted.

Source: UN News and Press Release

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