



The United Nations Special Procedures System

Expert Workshop

Programme

6-7 November 2014

Nottingham, United Kingdom

DAY 1 – Thursday 6 November

09:30-10:00 - Welcome and Opening Remarks

- *Professor Dominic McGoldrick*, HRLC Co-Director, University of Nottingham
- *Professor Aoife Nolan*, University of Nottingham
- *Professor Thérèse Murphy*, University of Nottingham
- *Dr Rosa Freedman*, University of Birmingham

10:00-11:30: Session 1 – The Development and Structure of the Special Procedures System

Chair: Professor Aoife Nolan

- a) What have been the key factors that have affected the development and structure of the system?
- b) What impact has the expansion of the system through increased numbers of mandates had in terms of resources, effectiveness, and the way states view Special Procedures?
- c) What impact has the new selection process had on (i) the pool of candidates; (ii) the politicisation of selecting mandate holders; (iii) gender and national diversity; and (iv) mandate holders' independence?
- d) To what extent has the Code of Conduct improved or detracted from (i) mandate holders' activities; and (ii) their relations with states?

Speakers:

- *Dr Elvira Dominguez-Redondo*, Middlesex University London: 'A history of the Special Procedures'
- *Marc Limon*, Universal Rights Group: 'A civil society perspective on the evolution of the Special Procedures'
- *Professor Olivier De Schutter*, former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food (2008-2014)/Member of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: 'The independence and accountability of mandate-holders'
- *Paul Bentall*, UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office: 'The impact of the code of conduct'

11:30-11:45: Coffee break

11:45-12:45: Session 1 continued

12:45-14:00: Lunch

14:00- 15:15: **Session 2 – Operationalisation of the Special Procedures – Part I**

Chair: Professor Thérèse Murphy

- a. What are the primary roles and functions of mandate holders and how do these relate to the dual mandates of protecting and promoting human rights?
- b. What are the main obstacles to those roles and functions being carried out?
- c. How do Working Groups differ from single expert mandates, and to what extent does having a Working Group with a related mandate enable or hinder mandate holders in terms of fulfilling their duties?
- d. Despite their role as independent experts, should mandate holders be directed as to their roles and functions (e.g. to provide normative guidelines where there is a need, or directed to fact-find on specific issues)?
- e. Does streamlining the system impact on mandate holders' independence and ability to carry out their functions?
- f. What are the key challenges in terms of the system's relationship with other parts of the UN Human Rights Machinery, particularly the OHCHR, the Human Rights Council, and the treaty-monitoring bodies?

Speakers:

- *Jane Connors*, UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights: 'The role of the OHCHR in supporting the Special Procedures'
- *Professor Shaheen Ali*, former Member of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (2008-2014): 'Enhancing the effectiveness of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention: Prospects and challenges'
- *Catarina de Albuquerque*, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation (since 2008): 'The challenges of Special Procedures work from the perspective of a relatively well-funded and supported mandate'
- *Professor Olivier De Frouville*, Member of the UN Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances (since 2008): 'The operationalisation of the Special Procedures – a view from a Working Group'

15:15-15:45: **Coffee**

15:45-17:00: **Session 2 Continued**

17:00-17:15: **Round-up of Day 1 and Outline of Publication Plans**

19:00: **Pick-up from hotel for workshop dinner at Hart's restaurant**

DAY 2 – Friday 7 November

09:00-10:30: Session 3 – Operationalisation of the Special Procedures – Part II

Chair: Professor Malcolm Evans, University of Bristol

- a. How are country visits selected? Is there a need to streamline this process?
- b. What specific challenges do country focused Special Procedures face in their work?
- c. How does the Special Procedures Committee support or assist mandate holders in undertaking their duties, creating relationships with states, and overcoming obstacles or challenges during the mandate?
- d. How effective are reports and recommendations?
- e. To what extent is follow-up viable and practicable?

Speakers:

- *Professor Surya Subedi*, UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Cambodia (since 2009): 'The specific challenges faced by country-focused Special Procedures'
- *Felice Gaer*, AJC Jacob Blaustein Institute/Member of the UN Committee Against Torture: 'The dynamics of country visit selection'
- *Dr Ahmed Shaheed*, UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran (since 2011): 'The challenges faced by Special Procedures working on countries that will not accept official visits'
- *Dr Najat M'jid*, former UN Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (2008-2014): 'The role of the Coordination Committee of Special Procedures'

10:30-11:00: **Coffee break**

11:00-12:00: **Session 3 continued**

12:00-13:15: **Lunch**

13:15-14:45: Session 4 - Engagement with States, the 'Politicisation' of Mandates, and the Impact of Ideological Tensions on the Special Procedures System

Chair: Dr Jessie Hohmann, Queen Mary University of London

- a) What, if any, patterns can be seen regarding which states are more open or resistant to the Special Procedures system as a whole?
- b) What, if any, patterns can be seen regarding which states are more open or resistant to categories of mandates? Does the Global North / Global South divide operate in relation to CPR, ESCR and TGR mandates?
- c) To what extent are there political pressures from sending states and / or countries that create or support specific mandates?

- d) How do relationships with states, regional groups, and political blocs affect a mandate holder's work?

Speakers:

- *Dr Danielle Beswick*, University of Birmingham: 'African engagement with Special Procedures: Insights from Politics and International Relations'
- *Phil Lynch*, International Service for Human Rights: 'Special Procedure engagement with civil society'
- *Dr Rosa Freedman*, University of Birmingham: 'Comparing and contrasting state engagement with mandate-holders'

14:45-15:15: Coffee

15:15-16:15: Session 4 continued

16:15-17:15: Final Session – Looking to the Future

- a) What reforms are required in order to strengthen and improve the system?
- b) How could / should these reforms be implemented?
- c) Who are the key actors that need to be engaged if these reforms are to be achieved?
- d) What are the key obstacles to reforming the system beyond the provision of additional resources?

17:15-17:20: Close and Thanks



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Participants

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Workshop Convenors:

Professor Aoife Nolan

Joint Head, Economic and Social Rights Unit, University of Nottingham Human Rights Law Centre

Professor Thérèse Murphy

Joint Head, Economic and Social Rights Unit, University of Nottingham Human Rights Law Centre

Dr Rosa Freedman

Senior Lecturer, Birmingham Law School, University of Birmingham

Workshop Participants:

Mr Paul Bentall

Multilateral Research Group, UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Dr Danielle Beswick

Senior Lecturer, International Development Department, University of Birmingham

Ms Jane Connors

Director of the Research and Right to Development Division, UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Ms Daria Davitti

Lecturer, School of Law, Keele University

Ms Catarina de Albuquerque

UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation (since 2008)

Professor Olivier de Frouville

Member of the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (since 2008)

Professor of Public Law at the University of Paris 2 (Panthéon-Assas)

Professor Olivier De Schutter

Member of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Professor at the Catholic University of Louvain

Former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food (2008-2014)

Dr Elvira Dominguez-Redondo

Senior Lecturer, School of Law, Middlesex University London

Professor Malcom Evans

Chairperson of the UN Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture

Professor of Public International Law, University of Bristol

Ms Felice Gaer

Vice-Chairperson of the UN Committee Against Torture

Director of AJC's Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights

Mr Karim Ghezraoui

Chief a.i of the Special Procedures Branch, UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Dr Jessie Hohmann

Lecturer, School of Law, Queen Mary University of London

Mr Marc Limon

Executive Director, Universal Rights Group

Mr Phil Lynch

Director, International Service for Human Rights

Dr Najat Maalla M'jid

Member of the Commission on the Rights of the Child, Morocco

Former UN Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (2008-2014)

Professor Shaheen Sardar Ali

Professor of Law, University of Warwick

Former Member and Chairperson of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (2008-2014)

Dr Ahmed Shaheed

UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran (since 2011)

Professor Surya Subedi

UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Cambodia (since 2009)

Professor of International Law, School of Law, University of Leeds