

**Mandates of the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls; the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression; the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association; the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; the Special Rapporteur on the sale, sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children and the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences**

Ref.: AL SDN 2/2024  
(Please use this reference in your reply)

21 August 2024

Excellency,

We have the honour to address you in our capacities as Working Group on discrimination against women and girls; Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression; Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association; Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; Special Rapporteur on the sale, sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children and Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 50/18, 51/8, 53/4, 52/9, 50/17, 51/21, 52/4, 52/26 and 50/7.

In this connection, we would like to bring to the attention of your Excellency's Government information we have received concerning **the lack of adequate care for survivors of gender-based violence in Sudan, including sexual and reproductive health care and psychosocial care, and the targeting of women human rights defenders and first responders who document human rights violations and provide services to survivors.**

According to the information received:

Since war between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) broke out in mid-April 2023, sexual and gender-based violence has been utilized as a weapon of war to terrorize women and girls as well as their communities. Women-led civil society organizations have documented numerous cases of sexual abuse, rape, including gang rape, forced prostitution, sexual slavery, kidnapping, and/or enforced disappearances. An estimated 6.7 million people are still at risk of gender-based violence in Sudan, with internally displaced, refugee and migrant women and girls particularly vulnerable.

*Lack of care for survivors of sexual violence*

Most women and girl survivors of sexual violence, some of whom have become pregnant, have been unable to receive timely care and medical services, including access to rape kits, emergency contraception and abortion. The vast majority of hospitals and health centres in conflict-affected areas

have been destroyed, looted or are struggling to operate as doctors and staff are displaced. Where facilities are still open, they may be under the control of armed forces, leaving survivors vulnerable to retaliation and further sexual violence if they seek care at these places.

It is also reported that survivors face administrative obstacles in accessing care, including the practice of requiring survivors to fill out a form 8 at a police station or an authorized hospital prior to receiving medical care for sexual violence. Though this requirement has been reportedly relaxed in some instances, the lack of police stations that are open and available for survivors to fill out a Form 8, as well as the shame and stigma associated with sexual violence, has prevented survivors from reporting to authorities and obtaining care. Furthermore, in some instances, survivors have reportedly faced difficulty obtaining an abortion for unwanted pregnancies due to the medical provider's religious objections.

As a result of the severely limited access to safe abortion performed by medical professionals, survivors with unwanted pregnancies have reportedly resorted to unsafe abortions performed by non-medical providers, risking death and complications. Furthermore, the lack of psychosocial care has also reportedly resulted in dire consequences, with at least seven documented cases of suicide by survivors.

For survivors who carry their pregnancies to term, pre- and post-partum services remain scarce, and the lack of safety in public spaces deters them from seeking necessary medical care. Most pregnant women and girls are reportedly forced to give birth at home or in insecure environments, including displacement sites, without adequate oversight by medical professionals. Furthermore, survivors who do not wish to raise the child have difficulty finding alternatives, given the unclear processes of arranging an adoption through state agencies. Survivors who wish to raise the child also face challenges due to the lack of state support and stigma associated with having a child born from sexual violence.

Survivors of sexual violence have not been able to enjoy protection, safety and security, as the risk for renewed exposure and subjugation to violence continues amidst extended fighting, widespread insecurity, and impunity.

#### *Attacks against women first responders and human rights defenders*

Since the beginning of the war, several women human rights defenders (WHRDs), including one woman journalist, have been reportedly killed in West Darfur, El-Geneina, and other conflict-affected areas of Sudan. Furthermore, several women first responders and volunteers have been attacked and subjected to sexual violence by the RSF and other armed forces. For example, on or around December 2023, two Emergency Room volunteers in Omdurman who provided medical support to survivors of sexual violence were raped by armed assailants.

Moreover, from January to June 2024, at least nine women human rights defenders and activists have reportedly been targeted by the SAF and other armed groups for interrogation, intimidation, and arbitrary arrests. Among

them were activists affiliated with the [REDACTED], and several local organizations. Many of the activists had been providing support to women in displacement sites, volunteering at healthcare centres, and/or documenting cases of gender-based violence. Several of them were reportedly arrested after they spoke out on the deteriorating situation of healthcare, women's rights, and power outages in Sudan on social media.

During their arrests, they were reportedly harassed, interrogated about social media posts, and subjected to a mobile phone search. During the arrests conducted by SAF, some activists were accused of crimes against the state and colluding with the RSF.

The series of targeted attacks and intimidation against women human rights defenders and first responders have left a chilling effect, interfering with their ability to deliver services and document human rights violations. Many of the arrests and detentions have been carried out without prosecutorial and judicial oversight in the context of enforcing states of emergencies, which have been imposed and renewed in at least 11 States. In some States, emergency orders have also prohibited the publication of information, without prior authorization, that would threaten public security in the state, effectively barring activists from publishing information on the human rights situation. Combined with decrees in various states banning the formation or gathering of grassroots organizations, frequent internet shutdowns, and power outages, these measures have further hampered the work of women human rights defenders and put their safety at risk. The documented use of food as a weapon by both armed groups and the resultant starvation of civilians has also had a differential impact on women and girls.

While we do not wish to prejudge the accuracy of the above-mentioned allegations, we are deeply concerned by the reported severe lack of adequate medical and psychosocial care for survivors of sexual violence, including those with unwanted pregnancies. We further express serious concern about the reported targeted intimidation, arbitrary arrests, and lack of protection for women human rights defenders, activists affiliated with different organizations and first responders, who are undertaking the critical work of documenting abuses and supporting survivors. We are further concerned about the chilling effect that these cases are prone to generate for the continued work of other women human rights defenders, journalists and activists and the exercise of their rights, including to freedom of expression.

Should these allegations be confirmed, they would constitute violations of the right to health, freedom from gender-based discrimination, freedom of opinion and expression, and freedom from arbitrary detention, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), among others.

In connection with the above alleged facts and concerns, please refer to the **Annex on Reference to international human rights law** attached to this letter which cites international human rights instruments and standards relevant to these allegations.

As it is our responsibility, under the mandates provided to us by the Human Rights Council, to seek to clarify all cases brought to our attention, we would be grateful for your observations on the following matters:

1. Please provide any additional information and/or comment(s) you may have on the above-mentioned allegations.
2. Please indicate measures taken by your Excellency's Government to ensure that women and girl survivors of sexual violence have adequate access to healthcare, including sexual and reproductive healthcare (e.g. access to safe abortion, contraceptives, and pre- and post-partum care) and psychosocial care.
3. Please provide actions taken by your Excellency's Government to support survivors of sexual violence who have given birth after becoming pregnant, including any support for their livelihoods, childcare, and measures to combat social stigma.
4. Please provide information on measures taken or planned by your Excellency's Government to strengthen alternative care systems for abandoned children born from unwanted pregnancies, and any relevant laws, policies and procedures for adoption of such children.
5. Please provide information on measures taken or planned by your Excellency's Government to remove administrative obstacles for women and girl survivors' access to health care, including addressing the practice of requiring survivors complete a Form 8 prior to receiving medical attention and/or approval for an abortion.
6. Please provide information on any investigation, prosecution and punishment of perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence during the war, including against women first responders and human rights defenders, as well as measures taken to ensure that such processes are gender-sensitive and survivor-centered.
7. Please provide information on whether any investigation has been initiated regarding the alleged killing of several women human rights defenders (WHRDs), including one woman journalist, and measures taken to ensure accountability.
8. Please provide detailed information as to the legality, necessity and proportionality of internet shutdowns, as well as state of emergencies and other decrees unduly restricting the right to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, including banning the formation of grassroots organizations and publication of information on human rights and security, in accordance with applicable international human rights law.
9. Please indicate measures that have been taken by your Excellency's Government to ensure that women first responders and women human rights defenders can carry out their activities free from arbitrary arrest, intimidation and persecution, in line with international human rights

standards. Please include information on any steps taken to investigate the killings of several women human rights defenders in line with applicable standards, including the Minnesota Protocol on the Investigation of Potentially Unlawful Death (2016).

10. Please indicate measures that have been taken by your Excellency's Government to protect women first responders and women human rights defenders from safety and security risks, including that of sexual violence.

We would appreciate receiving a response within 60 days. Past this delay, this communication and any response received from your Excellency's Government will be made public via the communications reporting [website](#). They will also subsequently be made available in the usual report to be presented to the Human Rights Council.

Further, we would like to inform that after having transmitted the information contained in the present communication to the Government, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention may also transmit the case through its regular procedure in order to render an opinion on whether the deprivation of liberty was arbitrary or not. The present communication in no way prejudices any opinion the Working Group may render. The Government is required to respond separately to the allegation letter and the regular procedure.

While awaiting a reply, we urge that all necessary interim measures be taken to halt the alleged violations and prevent their re-occurrence and in the event that the investigations support or suggest the allegations to be correct, to ensure the accountability of any person(s) responsible for the alleged violations.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

Laura Nyirinkindi  
Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls

Ganna Yudkivska  
Vice-Chair on communications of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention

Morris Tidball-Binz  
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Tlaleng Mofokeng  
Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health

Mary Lawlor  
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Special Rapporteur on the sale, sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children

Reem Alsalem  
Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences

## Annex

### Reference to international human rights law

In connection with above alleged facts and concerns, we would like to draw your attention to the relevant international norms and standards that are applicable to the issues brought forth by the situation described above.

#### *Right to non-discrimination and freedom from gender-based violence*

We would like to recall that the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, adopted by the General Assembly resolution 48/104 of 20 December 1993, states that women are entitled to equal enjoyment and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other fields. These rights include, inter alia, (a) the right to life; (b) the right to equality; (c) the right to liberty and security; (d) the right to equal protection under the law; (e) the right to be free from all forms of discrimination; (f) the right to the highest standards attainable of physical and mental health; (g) the right to just and favorable conditions of work; and (h) the right not to be subjected to torture and other forms of ill-treatment (article 3). In article 4 (g), the Declaration notes the importance of ensuring that women subjected to violence receive specialized assistance, such as rehabilitation, assistance in childcare, treatment, counselling, and health and social services, facilities and programmes, as well as support structures, and should take all other appropriate measures to promote their safety and physical and psychological rehabilitation.

As clarified by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee) in its general recommendation No. 35, the prohibition of gender-based violence has evolved into a principle of customary international law (para. 2). Furthermore, the understanding of gender-based violence as constituting a form of discrimination against women and girls, which is prohibited under International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), among others, have been confirmed by consistent State practice (CEDAW/C/GC/35, para. 2). As such, under customary international law, States have an obligation to prevent, protect, and fulfill the rights of women and girls to be free from gender-based violence, including by providing effective reparations and rehabilitation to survivors. Such measures should include “monetary compensation, the provision of legal, social and health services, including sexual, reproductive and mental health services for a complete recovery, and satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition” (CEDAW/C/GC/35, para. 33(a)).

Additionally, the Working Group on discrimination against women have found that non-State armed groups have often subjected women and girls to various forms of gender-based violence, including abductions and detentions, forced marriage or sexual slavery, and forced recruitment for combatant or support roles in conflicts (A/HRC/41/33, para. 72). The Working Group explained that such violations are motivated in part by the desire to impose a social order based on a strict division of gender roles and the subjugation of women. The Working Group has recommended that States effectively protect women and girls from non-State armed groups or criminal gangs, guarantee the non-recurrence of violations, and provide

comprehensive and appropriate services and reparation to survivors (para. 82).

*Right to health, including sexual and reproductive health*

We would also like to recall that article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) enshrines the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. In general comment No. 14, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) described the normative content of ICESCR article 12 and the legal obligations undertaken by the States parties to respect, protect and fulfil the right to physical and mental health. In particular, the Committee noted that the right to health entails the “right to control one’s health and body, including sexual and reproductive freedom,” and that States must ensure the full realization of women’s right to health by “remov[ing] all barriers interfering with access to health services, education and information,” and “undertak[ing] preventive, promotive and remedial action to shield women from the impact of ... norms that deny them their full reproductive rights.”

In addition, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in its general comment No. 22 (2016), clarified that all individuals must have access to justice and meaningful and effective remedy in instances in which the right to sexual and reproductive health is violated, such as adequate, effective and prompt reparation in the form of restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition, as appropriate. Victims whose rights to sexual and reproductive health are violated by third parties must receive remedies and such acts must be investigated and prosecuted.

The CEDAW Committee, in its general recommendation No. 35, also noted that “violations of women’s sexual and reproductive health and rights, such as forced sterilization, forced abortion, forced pregnancy, criminalization of abortion, denial or delay of safe abortion and/or post-abortion care, forced continuation of pregnancy, and abuse and mistreatment of women and girls seeking sexual and reproductive health information, goods and services, are forms of gender-based violence that, depending on the circumstances, may amount to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.” As torture is prohibited by the Convention Against Torture, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and customary international law, among others, States must provide effective remedy for violations of women’s sexual and reproductive health rights which amount to torture.

The Working Group on discrimination against women and girls, in its report on sexual and reproductive rights in crisis (A/HRC/47/38), also stressed that crisis responses must be gendered and require a combination of emergency and long-term measures. They must be developed and implemented with the active participation of women and girls, taking into account their urgent medical needs and the pervasive structural discrimination against them, while protecting individual autonomy and freedoms, through a coordinated and holistic approach. The Working Group stressed that sexual and reproductive health matters are intrinsic to every woman and girl and tied to their ability to live with dignity and exercise their agency. It expressed deep concern about the widespread impunity for violations of the sexual and reproductive health rights of women and girls. The experts emphasized that women and girls are entitled to receive adequate reparations, including restitution, compensation, satisfaction, rehabilitation and guarantees of non-repetition, for violations of their sexual and reproductive health rights, and States have a core obligation to ensure

access to effective and transparent reparations. The Working Group recommended expanding the availability of sexual and reproductive health services, including through telemedicine and mobile clinics, to reach diverse populations. The Working Group also recommended ensuring access to a full range of contraceptive information and services for women and girls, including emergency contraceptives. It recommended expanding access to safe abortion services, including medical abortion and post-abortion care, and removing legal barriers to abortion, in particular in situations of crisis.

### *Women human rights defenders*

We would like to refer to the fundamental principles set forth in the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, also known as the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. In particular, we would like to refer to articles 1 and 2 of the Declaration which state that everyone has the right to promote and to strive for the protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels and that each State has a prime responsibility and duty to protect, promote and implement all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Furthermore, as stressed by the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls in one of its reports to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/23/50), stigmatization, harassment and outright attacks are used to silence and discredit women who are outspoken as leaders, community workers, human rights defenders and politicians. Women defenders are often the target of gender-specific violence, such as verbal abuse based on their sex, sexual abuse or rape; they may experience intimidation, attacks, death threats and even murder. Violence against women defenders is sometimes condoned or perpetrated by State actors. The Working Group recommended to accelerate efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women, including through a comprehensive legal framework to combat impunity, in order to fulfil women's human rights and to improve the enabling conditions for women's participation in political and public life.

Moreover, in its thematic report on sexual and reproductive health rights in crisis (A/HRC/47/38), the Working Group expressed concern that women human rights defenders are targeted for violence and subjected to intimidation and retaliation because of their efforts to ensure women's sexual and reproductive health rights and for their demanding accountability for pervasive sexual violence and feminicides. Perceived as challenging traditional notions of family and gender roles in society, women human rights defenders are increasingly at risk of facing criminalization and detention as a result of their legitimate public activism, and are likely to be subject to criminal prosecution and imprisonment (A/HRC/41/33). In that regard, the Working Group recommended that States take effective measures to end violence and harassment against human rights defenders advocating for sexual and reproductive health rights, ensure accountability for perpetrators of such acts, and eliminate any laws or policy measures aimed at criminalizing women's public role.

We would also like to refer to General Assembly resolution 68/181, adopted on 18 December 2013, on the protection of women human rights defenders. Specifically, we would like to refer to articles 7, 9 and 10, whereby States are called upon to, respectively, publicly acknowledge the important role played by women

human rights defenders, take practical steps to prevent threats, harassment and violence against them and to combat impunity for such violations and abuses, and ensure that all legal provisions, administrative measures and policies affecting women human rights defenders are compatible with relevant provisions of international human rights law.

### *Right to life*

We would like to refer to article 6 of the ICCPR which provides that every individual has the right to life and security of the person, that this right shall be protected by law, and that no person shall be arbitrarily deprived of his or her life. In its general comment No. 31, the Human Rights Committee recalls the responsibility of State parties to exercise due diligence to prevent, punish, investigate and bring perpetrators to justice or redress the harm caused by non- state actors (CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.13, paras. 8 and 18).

The Human Rights Committee has also underlined, in general comment no. 36 on the right to life (CCPR/C/GC/36 - 2019) that states parties must provide safe, legal and effective access to abortion where the life and health of the pregnant woman or girl is at risk, or where carrying a pregnancy to term would cause the pregnant woman or girl substantial pain or suffering, most notably where the pregnancy is the result of rape or incest or where the pregnancy is not viable... States parties should remove existing barriers to effective access by women and girls to safe and legal abortion... States parties should also effectively protect the lives of women and girls against the mental and physical health risks associated with unsafe abortions. In particular, they should ensure access for women and men, and especially girls and boys, to quality and evidence-based information and education on sexual and reproductive health and to a wide range of affordable contraceptive methods, and prevent the stigmatization of women and girls who seek abortion. States parties should ensure the availability of, and effective access to, quality prenatal and post-abortion health care for women and girls, in all circumstances and on a confidential basis.

We recall the duty of your Excellency's Government to investigate alleged or suspected violations of article 6 including in situations of armed conflict in a prompt, effective, thorough, independent, impartial and transparent manner, and that all persons identified by the investigation as having participated in crimes of extra-legal or arbitrary killings, should be brought to justice and punished with sentences commensurate with the gravity of the crimes committed (general comment No. 36). Failure to properly, independently and reliably investigate the killing, with a view to holding accountable those responsible, would in itself constitute a grave violation under international humanitarian law. In this respect, we refer to the United Nations Revised Manual for the Effective Investigation of Extra-Legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions also known as the Minnesota Protocol on the Investigation of Potentially Unlawful Death (2016) ("The Minnesota Protocol"), which provides detailed guidelines on the duty to investigate potential unlawful deaths "promptly, effectively and thoroughly, with independence, impartiality and transparency."

### *Freedom from arbitrary detention*

We would like to recall article 9 of the ICCPR, which guarantees everyone the right to liberty and security of the person. As emphasized by the Human Rights Committee in general comment No. 35 (CCPR/C/GC/35), deprivation of liberty must

not be arbitrary and must be carried out with respect for the rule of law (paragraph 10). According to the same General Comment (paragraph 17) and the jurisprudence of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, arrest or detention of an individual as punishment for the legitimate exercise of the rights guaranteed by the ICCPR, including freedom of opinion and expression, is arbitrary. The Human Rights Committee further stresses that persons who are deprived of liberty shall be informed, at the time of any deprivation of liberty, of the reasons for it (paragraph 24). That information must be provided immediately (paragraph 27). The Human Rights Committee has also interpreted that it should not be the general practice to subject defendants to pre-trial detention (paragraph 38). Detention pending trial must be based on an individualized determination that it is reasonable and necessary taking into account all the circumstances, for such purposes as to prevent flight, interference with evidence, or the recurrence of crime (Id.).

Additionally, the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls noted in its 2019 thematic report that women are deprived of their liberty, mostly arbitrarily and in a discriminatory fashion, in violation of the law and human rights standards (A/HRC/41/33). The Working Group noted that depriving women of liberty imposes great human costs of missed opportunities and contributions and often inflicts intergenerational harm and negative impacts on families and communities. In a number of States, the Working Group found that women who work specifically to combat gender stereotypes and advance women's rights are most likely to be targets for criminal persecution and imprisonment. The Working Group recommended States to support and protect women's engagement in public and political life, including the work of women human rights defenders, and eliminate any measures designed to criminalize the public roles of women.

#### *Freedom of opinion and expression*

We wish to also refer to article 19 of the ICCPR, which guarantees the right to opinion and expression. In its general comment No. 34, the Human Rights Committee stated that States parties to the ICCPR are required to guarantee the right to freedom of opinion and expression, including inter alia 'political discourse, commentary on one's own and on public affairs, canvassing, discussion of human rights, journalism, cultural and artistic expression, teaching, and religious discourse', subject only to admissible restrictions as well as the prohibition of propaganda for hatred and incitement to hatred, violence and discrimination. Any restriction on the right to freedom of expression must be compatible with the requirements set out in article 19(3) of the ICRC, that is, they must be provided by law, pursue a legitimate aim, and be necessary and proportionate. The State has the burden of proof to demonstrate that any such restrictions are compatible with the Covenant. Additionally, the Committee stated that an attack on a person because of the exercise of his or her freedom of opinion or expression, including arbitrary arrest, torture, threats to life and killing, cannot be compatible with Article 19 and asserted that there is a duty of States to put in place effective measures to protect against attacks aimed at silencing those exercising their right to freedom of expression (para. 23).

We would further like to note that the complete shutdown of the internet and telecommunication networks contravene the fundamental principles of necessity and proportionality that must be met by any restriction on freedom of expression. Shutdowns fail to reach the established test for restrictions to the right to freedom of opinion and expression under article 19(3) of the ICCPR, as well as for restrictions on

the freedom of peaceful assembly and of association under articles 21 and 22(2) ICCPR. With regard to internet access, we also recall that the same rights that people have offline must also be protected online, as emphasized in CCPR/C/GC/34 para. 12, UN General Assembly resolution 68/167, Human Rights Council resolutions 26/13 and 32/13, as well as the report of the Special Rapporteur on the freedom of expression A/HRC/35/22 and A/HRC/44/49. In this regard, we would further like to draw your attention to Human Rights Council Resolution 32/13, which “condemn[ed] unequivocally measures to intentionally prevent or disrupt access to or dissemination of information online in violation of international human rights law, calls upon all States to refrain from and cease such measures.”

#### *Freedom of association*

Article 22 of the ICCPR protects the right to freedom of association with others. As stated in a report by the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, States not only have a negative obligation to abstain from unduly interfering with the rights of peaceful assembly and of association but also have a positive obligation to facilitate and protect these rights in accordance with international human rights standards [A/HRC/17/27, para. 66; and A/HRC/29/25/Add.1].