

**Mandates of the Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity; the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises; the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights; the Special Rapporteur on the right to education; 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 adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context; the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; the Independent expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order; the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls**

Ref.: AL USA 17/2025

(Please use this reference in your reply)

8 July 2025

Excellency,

We have the honour to address you in our capacities as Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity; Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises; Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights; Special Rapporteur on the right to education; 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 adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context; Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; Independent expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order; Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and Working Group on discrimination against women and girls, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 53/5, 53/3, 55/5, 53/7, 52/9, 50/17, 52/10, 52/4, 57/7, 52/36 and 50/18.

In this connection, we would like to bring to the attention of your Excellency's Government information we have received concerning the dispersal of peaceful protests against the war in Gaza and universities' ties with companies implicated in alleged war crimes and the arrests of peaceful student protesters at the University of California, Los Angeles.

The letter follows the joint communication of 10 May 2024 (ref. AL [USA 12/2024](#)), concerning the arrests and detention of peaceful student protesters, including student human rights defenders.

While we would like to thank your Excellency's Government for its response to the aforementioned communication dated [16 July 2024](#), we remain concerned, given the allegations below, at the potential for further arbitrary arrests and detention, suspensions and other sanctions imposed on students participating in protests, which could further lead to loss of housing and immigration status for foreign students.

According to the information received:

In the evening of 30 April 2025, approximately sixty UCLA Police Department officers in riot gear, brandishing projectile weapons, and supported by private security, raided an outdoor film screening of *The Encampments*, a documentary about the Palestine solidarity encampments of Spring 2024. As a helicopter hovered overhead, two of the police officers on motorcycles drove through the enclosed campus plaza circled by dormitories, causing students to flee in panic, and resulting in the injury of one student, who required emergency medical attention. The police officers confiscated the impromptu movie screen, consisting of a bedsheet and poles, on the basis that it was an “illegal structure” in violation of the University’s time, place and manner policies. During the raid two individuals were arrested while another student had been detained earlier that day elsewhere on campus.

Police officers, and private security personnel, who had reportedly been assigned to the campus on 24 April, returned on 30 April in advance of the gathering. Before the screening was due to start, the Royce Quad on campus (a green space that lies between one of the main campus libraries and faculty buildings) was blocked off, and student organizers were informed by student-affairs staff and police that they could not set up in the area. A decision was therefore taken to move the screening to Bruin Plaza, an area specifically designated as an “Area for Public Expression,” where events do not have to be registered in advance with the University.

The purpose of the afore-mentioned gathering was to mark the one-year anniversary of an attack on a Palestine solidarity encampment at the University in April 2024. At that time, approximately 200 individuals, wearing ski masks, and wielding weapons and pepper spray reportedly descended upon the gathering and proceeded to assault the students, while police and security personnel allegedly looked on. A number of students were injured during the incident. In the days that followed, on 1, 2 and 6 May 2024, hundreds of police officers in riot gear armed with truncheons, projectile weapons, pepper spray, and flashbang grenades were reportedly sent to Royce Quad to dismantle the encampment. Over 200 hundred students were arrested. Twenty-seven more students were arrested on 10 June 2024. The arrests were reportedly carried out with force in a number of cases, while disciplinary proceedings and the confiscation of mobile phones prevented students from contacting their families and friends.

In the morning of 30 April 2025, seven students wearing keffiyehs were detained by police on a campus parking lot. The basis for the arrest was related to an alleged seat belt issue.

Previously, on 20 March 2025, the civil rights lawsuit *Boosinger v. Regents of the University of California* was filed on behalf of 35 UCLA students, faculty, community members, reporters, and legal observers. The submission includes compensation claims for violations of civil rights by threat, intimidation, coercion, and through violent means as well as separate claims for assault, battery, negligence, false arrest, and unlawful police shootings on campus

against peaceful protesters.

On 25 April 2025, the Los Angeles City Attorney's office announced it will not file charges against the 245 protesters arrested on 1, 2 and 6 May 2024 at UCLA, citing lack of sufficient evidence. A decision has yet to be made on the cases of the 27 students who were arrested on 10 June 2024. Meanwhile, under new guidance issued in May 2024, all those students who were arrested are automatically enrolled in disciplinary proceedings where they may face suspension or expulsion from the University.

Volunteer lawyers representing the students are currently contesting the ongoing disciplinary hearings, arguing that there is insufficient individualized evidence against students in these proceedings, therefore requesting that UCLA terminate the hearings. Thus far, UCLA has reportedly failed to grant the request to terminate proceedings.

While we do not wish to prejudge the accuracy of these allegations, we reiterate our deep concern at the restrictions imposed on peaceful protests by students, including student human rights defenders, expressing solidarity with the Palestinian victims of the ongoing conflict in Gaza and opposing what they deemed to be the University's support of Israeli policies and its relationships with companies having ties to Israel or profiting from the conflict or the occupation of Palestine. In particular, we are concerned by the dispersal of peaceful protests and by reports of violent arrests of peaceful protesters, which risks creating a chilling effect on the exercise of the rights to freedom of assembly and expression. We continue to be troubled by allegations that these developments reflect a deliberate effort to restrict dissenting and critical voices regarding the United States and Israeli Governments' and Universities' policies regarding Israel. If confirmed, this would amount to a violation of your Excellency's Government's obligations to respect and protect under international human rights law, in particular articles 9, 19 and 21 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

We would like to express our deep concern about the actions taken by the police and the university authorities in relation to the protests described above, which appear to be unnecessary, disproportionate and violate the students' right to peaceful assembly, as their dispersal seems to be lacking legal justification under article 21 of the ICCPR. We would also like to respectfully remind your Excellency's Government that when limits are established on a university campus States have obligations to ensure that dispersal actions should not be taken without compelling reasons. Even on a private campus, freedom of peaceful assembly must be respected, and the limits established, particularly when justified on the basis of time, place and manner—must be content-neutral, reasonable, necessary and proportionate, leaving in all cases ample available room to protest for students, professors and other members of the academic community. In this context, we refer your Excellency's Government to joint statements<sup>1</sup> issued by various UN experts calling on States to ensure that peaceful protests and rights movements are facilitated rather than restricted or criminalised for advocating on human rights and international criminal accountability and that the rights of civil

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2024/02/israelopt-enabling-human-rights-defenders-and-peaceful-protests-vital-achieving> and <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/11/speaking-out-gaza-israel-must-be-allowed-un-experts>

society, human rights defenders, the academic community, and peaceful protesters are respected and protected. We further wish to refer to a set of recommendations sent to universities in October 2024 by the Special Rapporteur for the rights of freedom of assembly and association.

Since our last communication of May 2024, we are concerned that further arbitrary arrests, suspensions and other sanctions, have continued to lead to loss of housing and immigration status. Loss of housing due to sanctions or suspensions is arbitrary and contrary to international law, including under article 11 ICESCR and applicable tenant protection and just-cause eviction laws at the state<sup>2</sup> and county<sup>3</sup> levels.

The United States also has a responsibility to respect and protect academic freedom, including the autonomy of academic institutions by virtue of their special role in society, which is underpinned by a range of human rights, including the rights to education, freedom of opinion, expression, association and peaceful assembly. These rights are binding under international law and/or domestic law on the United States and its subnational entities, as well as private actors such as universities. In addition, as noted by the former Special Rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression, “external interference in the selection, appointment and dismissal of leadership and professors in academic institutions ultimately constitutes a restriction on academic freedom often based on grounds that are neither academic nor rooted in article 19 (3).” In addition, “the willingness of universities to submit to public pressure can erode academic freedom and freedom of expression” (See A/HRC/75/261, paras. 39 and 41). Finally, we wish to underscore that the right to express views on a campus inside or outside of class is at the heart of academic freedom, which is a key part of the right to education (A/HRC/56/58). The Working Group on discrimination against women and girls has also warned that restrictions on academic freedom and measures taken against peaceful assemblies often have disparate impacts on women and young women activists and women rights defenders (A/HRC/50/25).

We strongly denounce anti-Semitism and Islamophobia as very serious forms of racial hatred and intolerance, and underline that any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence must be prohibited by law in accordance with article 20(2) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The Government and the University administration must act firmly against all forms of racial and religious harassment, including antisemitism and Islamophobia. However, we are disturbed by the vague and overly broad use of the term “antisemitism” to label, denounce and repress peaceful protests and other forms of expression of solidarity with Palestinians victims, calls for a ceasefire in Gaza or the legitimate criticism of the Government of Israel’s policies and practices, including its conduct of the conflict in Gaza and allegations of genocide. We stress that any restriction of freedom of expression must meet the conditions of legality, necessity and proportionality set out in articles 19(3) of the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights. Furthermore, all accusations and concerns of rising antisemitism on University campuses must be grounded in concrete, factual evidence and properly investigated with due process guarantees, with the objective of protecting all students from hate speech while upholding the right to freedom of expression in accordance with international human rights standards.

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<sup>2</sup> [https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201920200AB1482](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200AB1482)

<sup>3</sup> [https://clkrep.lacity.org/onlinedocs/2021/21-0042-S3\\_ord\\_187737\\_1-27-23.pdf](https://clkrep.lacity.org/onlinedocs/2021/21-0042-S3_ord_187737_1-27-23.pdf)

We recall that, in her recent report on “Global threats to freedom of expression related to the conflict in Gaza,” the Special Rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression emphasised that “in light of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice issued in July 2024, States should repeal - or refrain from adopting - laws and policies that criminalise opposition to Israeli occupation and segregation or that impede advocacy activities against these phenomena, such as laws against the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement”. The Special Rapporteur reaffirmed that “States should not restrict the expression of support for Palestinian self-determination,” stressing that “the defence of the human rights of Palestinians, including the right to self-determination, is a legitimate expression,” while she emphasized that “any decision to prohibit acts or forms of expression on grounds of incitement must be taken on a case-by-case basis, and take into account international legal standards, the specific context and other factors, as provided for in the Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of incitement to national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence” (A/79/319, paras. 93, 94 and 95).

We urge your Excellency’s Government to uphold the fundamental right to freedom of expression, recognized by the United States in its Constitution, and the right to peaceful assembly, thus ensuring a free and safe environment for all those peacefully protesting against the conflict in Gaza and/or for the rights of Palestinian people, including human rights defenders. We encourage your Excellency’s Government to ensure that Federal and State authorities and public and private academic institutions “adopt and enforce policies that ensure the protection of the free expression rights of the members of their communities, resisting official or social pressure and promising human rights compliance institutionally.” (A/HRC/75/261, para. 12).

As highlighted previously<sup>4</sup>, we further urge your Excellency’s Government to take all the necessary measures to ensure that international students who have participated in university protests in solidarity with Palestine are not subjected to repression and retaliation, including in the form of arbitrary detention of U.S. lawful permanent residents and international students. The learning environment within university campuses should be inviolable, while every effort should be made to protect students from further trauma and polarization. No student should be denied the right to complete their education and from pursuing their future academic or professional aspirations. Revocation of visas and deportation will not promote peace within campuses. Reconciliation and mutual respect are now more urgent than ever to promote healing dialogue.

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:

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/03/deporting-international-students-involved-pro-palestinian-protests-will>

1. Please provide any additional information and/or comment(s) you may have on the above-mentioned allegations.
2. Please provide the details of any investigation, and judicial or other inquiries which may have been carried out in relation to allegations of human rights violations during the protests on university campuses, including at the University of California, Los Angeles. If no inquiries have taken place, or if they have been inconclusive, please explain why. Please also indicate any measures taken by your Excellency's Government to ensure that the victims of alleged violations have access to an effective remedy.
3. Please provide information on the justification for the dispersal of the protests, and how these measures comply with articles 9, 19 and 21 of the ICCPR. Please also provide justification for the disciplinary action that has reportedly been taken against those students who participated in the protests.
4. Please explain the steps taken to ensure that academic institutions respect human rights in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) including by requiring them to conduct human rights due diligence to prevent, mitigate and remediate the adverse human rights impacts throughout their activities. In particular, please provide details regarding measures adopted to ensure academic institutions respect the rights to participate in peaceful protests and to freedom of expression, and that any restrictions on these rights imposed in the campus comply with international human rights standards, including the UNGPs.
5. Please provide information about the measures your Excellency's Government has taken or intends to take to ensure that academic institutions operating under its jurisdiction respect the vital role of student human rights defenders, including by ensuring that the legitimate activities of human rights defenders are not obstructed, in line with the UNGPs. This includes their rights to protest and make public statements lawfully, including calling for a ceasefire in Gaza, and for accountability for gross human rights violations and/or expressing support to Palestinian and/or Israeli victims, and their right to participate in protests.
6. Please provide information about the measures taken to ensure that accusations and concerns of rising antisemitism at the University of California, Los Angeles and other University campuses are grounded in concrete, factual evidence and properly investigated with due process guarantees, in line with articles 19(3) and article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, while upholding the right to freedom of expression in accordance with international human rights standards.

7. Please provide information on how your Excellency's Government plans to ensure that no university student may lose their university accommodation and/or their immigration status merely as a result of participating in peaceful protests.

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

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 note that a similar letter on this issue has been sent to the University of California, Los Angeles.

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

Cecilia M. Bailliet

Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity

Lyra Jakulevičienė

Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises

Alexandra Xanthaki

Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights

Farida Shaheed

Special Rapporteur on the right to education

Michael Fakhri

Special Rapporteur on the right to food

Irene Khan

Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression

Gina Romero

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Balakrishnan Rajagopal

Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context

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K.P. Ashwini  
Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination,  
xenophobia and related intolerance

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

## Annex

### Reference to international human rights law and standards

In connection with above alleged facts and concerns, we would like to refer your Excellency's Government to articles 9, 19, and 21 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), ratified by the United States on 8 June 1992.

Article 19 of the ICCPR guarantees the right to freedom of opinion and expression. Articles 21 and 22 protect the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association. Article 21 states that “[t]he right of peaceful assembly shall be recognized. No restrictions may be placed on the exercise of this right other than those imposed in conformity with the law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order (*ordre public*), the protection of public health or morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.”

The Human Rights Committee previously affirmed that States “should effectively guarantee and protect the freedom of peaceful assembly and avoid restrictions that do not respond to the requirements under article 4 of the Covenant. In particular, it should refrain from imposing detention on individuals who are exercising their rights and who do not present a serious risk to national security or public safety” (CCPR/C/THA/CO/2, para. 40). In this regard, we would also like to refer to the General Comment No. 37 of the Human Rights Committee on the right of peaceful assembly (CCPR/C/GC/37), which stressed that “the possibility that a peaceful assembly may provoke adverse or even violent reactions from some members of the public is not sufficient grounds to prohibit or restrict the assembly. [...] States are obliged to take all reasonable measures that do not impose disproportionate burdens upon them to protect all participants and to allow such assemblies to take place in an uninterrupted manner”.

In addition, we would like to further recall that 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]. This means ensuring that the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association are enjoyed by everyone, without discrimination on the basis of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status (article 2 (1) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights) [see also ICCPR, art. 26] (A/HRC/41/41, para. 13).

Besides, “A failure to notify the authorities of an upcoming assembly, where required, does not render the act of participation in the assembly unlawful, and must not in itself be used as a basis for dispersing the assembly or arresting the participants or organizers, or for imposing undue sanctions, such as charging the participants or organizers with criminal offences” (CCPR/C/GC/37, para. 71). It is important to mention that participants of assemblies must be able to freely decide the purpose or any expressive content of an assembly, as well as its place, time and manner “given the typically expressive nature of assemblies, participants must as far as possible be enabled to conduct assemblies within sight and sound of their target audience”

(CCPR/C/GC/37, para. 22).

Article 19 of the ICCPR guarantees the right to freedom of opinion and the right to freedom of expression, which includes the right “to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media”. This right applies online as well as offline and includes not only the exchange of information that is favourable, but also that which may criticize, shock, or offend.

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 expression, including “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” (CCPR/C/GC/34, para. 11). The Committee further asserts 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).

Any restriction on the right to freedom of expression must be compatible with the requirements set out in article 19(3) ICCPR. Under these requirements, restrictions must (i) be provided by law; (ii) pursue one of the legitimate aims for restriction, which are the respect of the rights or reputations of others and the protection of national security or of public order (*ordre public*), or of public health or morals; and (iii) be necessary and proportionate for those objectives. The State has the burden of proof to demonstrate that any such restrictions are compatible with the Covenant, proving “in specific and individualized fashion the precise nature of the threat, and the necessity and proportionality of the specific action taken, in particular by establishing a direct and immediate connection between the expression and the threat” (CCPR/C/GC/34, para. 35). 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 (GC34 para. 23). In this regard, the Human Rights Committee stated that the restrictions must be “the least intrusive instrument among those which might achieve their protective function”. ([CCPR/C/GC/34](#), para. 34).

Additionally, Human Rights Council Resolution 12/16 calls on States to refrain from imposing restrictions which are not consistent with article 19(3), including: discussion of government policies and political debate; reporting on human rights; engaging in peaceful demonstrations or political activities, including for peace or democracy; and expression of opinion and dissent, religion or belief, including by persons belonging to minorities or vulnerable groups.

In her recent report on “Global threats to freedom of expression related to the conflict in Gaza,” the Special Rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression emphasised that “in light of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice issued in July 2024, States should repeal - or refrain from adopting - laws and policies that criminalise opposition to Israeli occupation and segregation or that impede advocacy activities against these phenomena, such as laws against the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement”. The Special Rapporteur reaffirmed that “States should not restrict the expression of support for Palestinian self-determination,” stressing that “the defence of the human rights of Palestinians, including the right to

self-determination, is a legitimate expression,” while she emphasized that “any decision to prohibit acts or forms of expression on grounds of incitement must be taken on a case-by-case basis, and take into account international legal standards, the specific context and other factors, as provided for in the Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of incitement to national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence” (A/79/319, paras. 93, 94 and 95).

Regarding the significant number of arrests, without expressing at this stage an opinion on the facts of the case and on whether the reported detentions were arbitrary or not, we recall that the Human Rights Committee’s General Comment no. 35 affirms that arrest or detention as punishment for the legitimate exercise of the rights as guaranteed by the Covenant is arbitrary, including freedom of opinion and expression (art. 19), freedom of assembly (art. 21) and freedom of association (art. 22), freedom of religion (art. 18) and the right to privacy (art. 17). Arrest or detention on discriminatory grounds in violation of article 2, paragraph 1, article 3 or article 26 is also in principle arbitrary.

We draw the attention of your Excellency’s Government to article 9 of the ICCPR, whereby everyone has the right to liberty and security of person, no one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention and no one shall be deprived of his liberty except on such grounds and in accordance with such procedure as are established by law. We recall that a deprivation of liberty is considered arbitrary when it constitutes a violation of international law on the grounds of discrimination, including discrimination based on the status of an individual as a journalist or a human rights defender.

Further, we would like to refer your Excellency's Government to the report on academic freedom of the former Special Rapporteur on the right to freedom of opinion and expression, where he stressed that although there are many ways in which the freedom of opinion and expression protects and promotes academic freedom, there is no single, exclusive international human rights framework for the subject. Within the corpus of civil and political rights, protected under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and codified in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the rights to peaceful assembly and association, privacy, and thought, conscience and religious belief can promote and protect academic freedom. Articles 13 (right to education) and 15 (right to scientific advancements) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, signed by the United States in 1977, expressly promote rights at the centre of academic freedom (A/75/261, para. 5). The Special Rapporteur also recommended that States recognize the vital importance of academic freedom by refraining from attacks on academic institutions and those who constitute academic communities, and by protecting them from attacks – insulating them from assault – by third parties. He stressed that States should at the minimum ensure “the institutional autonomy of universities, research institutes and other bodies that constitute the academic community. The recognition of such autonomy includes recognition of the special autonomous space of academic campuses and the importance of allowing that space to be a vibrant space for the exercise of the rights to expression, protest and other fundamental freedoms.” (A/75/261, para. 56).

In addition, we wish to remind your Excellency’s Government about their obligations under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), ratified by the United States of America on 21 October

1994. Article 2 of the ICERD provides a comprehensive prohibition of all forms of racial discrimination. Article 5 outlines State parties' obligations to prohibit and eliminate racial discrimination in all its forms and to guarantee the right of everyone, without distinction as to race, colour, or national or ethnic origin, to equality before the law. This includes in relation to the enjoyment of the rights to security of person and protection by the State against violence or bodily harm, whether inflicted by government officials or by any individual group or institution; to freedom of opinion and expression; and to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

We further wish to draw your attention to the right to adequate housing, enshrined in article 25.1 of UDHR and article 11.1 of the ICESCR. In its general comment No. 7, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights stressed that evictions should not result in individuals being rendered homeless or vulnerable to the violation of other human rights. Those who are unable to provide for themselves must be provided with adequate alternative housing, among others.

In addition, we refer your Excellency's Government 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. We further wish to draw your Excellency's Government's attention to article 5(a) of the UN Declaration, which provides for everyone's right, individually and in association with others, to meet or assemble peacefully, and article 12, which reiterates everyone's right to participate in peaceful activities against violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms and the State's obligation to take all necessary measures to "ensure the protection by the competent authorities of everyone, individually and in association with others, against any violence, threats, retaliation, de facto or de jure adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the [...] Declaration".

Moreover, we would like to draw your attention to the General Assembly Resolution 68/181, which urges States to acknowledge publicly the important and legitimate role of women human rights defenders in the promotion and protection of human rights, democracy, the rule of law and development as an essential component of ensuring their protection, including by publicly condemning violence and discrimination against them.

We invite you to refer to the Human Rights Council resolution 31/32 as well, in which States expressed particular concern about systemic and structural discrimination and violence faced by women human rights defenders. States should take all necessary measures to ensure the protection of women human rights defenders and to integrate a gender perspective into their efforts to create a safe and enabling environment for the defence of human rights.

We would also like to recall to your Excellency's Government that the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls, in its report on public and political life (A/HRC/23/50), stated that women human rights defenders are often the target of gender-specific violence, such as intimidation and attacks, which is sometimes condoned or perpetrated by State actors, including through police harassment of female demonstrators. The Working Group has called upon States to eliminate all forms of violence against women in order to fulfil women's human rights and to improve the enabling condition for women's participation in public and political life.

Moreover, the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls' report on girls' and young women's activism (A/HRC/50/25) expressed that girls and young women are mobilizing worldwide to demand and catalyse change on critical global issues. The realization of girls' and young women's human right to participate in public and political life is essential for the protection of their human rights. The Working Group called on States to take all appropriate measures to create safe and enabling spaces for girl and young women activists, where they can exercise their activism and express their views freely, equally, fully and meaningfully on all matters of relevance to them.

Furthermore, in its thematic report on women deprived of liberty (A/HRC/41/33), the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls underlined the increasing risk of criminalization and detention faced by women human rights defenders as a result of their legitimate public activism. 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 laws or policy measures designed to criminalize the public roles of women.

We also refer you to the thematic report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences on violence against women in politics, which emphasizes that in addition to the right to freedom of association and peaceful assembly, the right of women and girls to assemble, associate and express their political views and participate in political life must be upheld (A/73/301). Furthermore, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women defines the scope of violence against women to include the public and private sphere and refers to the equal protection of the right of women to enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political field, amongst others (article 3).

Finally, we also wish to refer you to the thematic report of the Independent Expert on international solidarity in relation to civil society which refers to the need to support students in their solidarity expressions in accordance with non-discrimination and equality norms, as well as to provide solidarity scholarships (domestic and international) for marginalized students (A/HRC/56/57 para. 53).