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|  | United Nations | CAT/C/SYR/1 | |
| _unlogo | **Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment** | | Distr.: General  17 December 2019  Original: English  Arabic and English only |

**Committee against Torture**

Initial report submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic under article 19 of the Convention, due in [year][[1]](#footnote-3)\*

[Date received: 00 Month YYYY]

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I. Introduction

1. The present report contains an overview in numbers of the system of special procedures and concrete examples of the activities undertaken by mandate holders in 2015. It also contains information on the work of the Coordination Committee of Special Procedures and on the main points of the discussions held and conclusions reached at the 22nd annual meeting of the special procedures. In particular, the report contains information on the steps taken to address the main issues of concern for mandate holders, namely, acts of intimidation and reprisal against those cooperating with the United Nations in the field of human rights, **including** the special procedures, and the issue of disclosure of external funds received by mandate holders. The examples provided in the report are indicative only and do not reflect the many activities carried out by all mandate holders in 2015.

II. Facts and figures

A. New mandates

2. The Human Rights Council established two new mandates in 2015; that of the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of human rights by persons with albinism (see Human Rights Council resolution 28/6) and of the Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy (see resolution 28/16). The special procedures system currently consists of 55 mandates, of which 41 have a thematic focus and 14 have a country-specific focus (see annex XI).

B. Mandate holders

3. The special procedures system currently includes 79 mandate holder positions, of which 12 were appointed in 2015. By its decision 30/115, the Council decided to adjust the terms of mandate holders on an exceptional one-time basis in order to better spread out the appointment process over time, extending the term of all Working Group members by two regular sessions of the Council.

4. As at 31 December 2015, 24 per cent of mandate holders came from States Members of the United Nations belonging to the African Group, 16 per cent from the Asia-Pacific Group, 13 per cent from the Eastern European Group, 19 per cent from the Latin American and Caribbean Group and 28 per cent from the Western European and Others Group (see annex II). Currently, a total of 37 per cent of mandate holders are female and 63 per cent are male.

C. Country visits and standing invitations

5. In 2015, mandate holders conducted 76 country visits to 53 States and territories (see annex IV). Six Member States extended a standing invitation to special procedures in 2015, resulting in a total of 115 Member States and one non-member observer State having extended a standing invitation to the thematic special procedures (see annex III):

a) As at 31 December 2015, 167 Member States had been visited by at least one mandate holder. That means that 26 Member States have never been visited by any mandate holder, either because they have not yet received a request (14 Member States), they have not yet accepted any request (10 Member States) or they have accepted the request for a country visit but it has not yet taken place (2 Member States) (see annex V). Some country mandates continued to be refused access to the country on which they are mandated to report;

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b) An internal database on country visits, from which external web pages can be populated, was developed by the special procedures branch in 2015 to facilitate direct access to all information on country visits, including the requests sent, replies received, forthcoming visits and visits conducted. The current status of a country visit is displayed on the special procedures web pages in real time.[[2]](#footnote-4) Using the tool, the progress of a visit can be monitored at all stages, from the official request to the Member State to the presentation of the country visit report.

D. Communications

6. Mandate holders transmitted a total of 532 communications in 2015, to 123 States and 13 non-State actors. The overwhelming majority, 442 communications, were sent jointly by two or more mandate holders. Communications covered at least 846 individuals, 152 of whom were women. A total of 318 replies were received in 2015, of which 222 were related to communications sent in 2015 (representing a reply rate of 42 per cent), varying from acknowledgements of receipt to substantive replies. A total of 137 communications were followed up by mandate holders (see annex VI). Three communications reports were submitted to the Human Rights Council in 2015 (see A/HRC/28/85, A/HRC/29/50 and A/HRC/30/27).

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1. \* The present document is being issued without formal editing. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
2. See <http://spinternet.ohchr.org/_Layouts/SpecialProceduresInternet/Forthcomingcountryvisits.aspx>, <http://spinternet.ohchr.org/_Layouts/SpecialProceduresInternet/ViewCountryVisits.aspx?Lang=en> and http://spinternet.ohchr.org/\_Layouts/SpecialProceduresInternet/StandingInvitations.aspx. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)