



BANGKOK BULLETIN

The UN and Human Rights in Asia-Pacific

Commission on Human Rights: Special Edition No.1

Regional Representative for Asia-Pacific, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

What is the Commission on Human Rights?

The United Nations [Commission on Human Rights](#), the principle human rights organ of the UN, started its annual six week session on 17 March in Geneva. Over 3,000 delegates from member and observer States and from non-governmental organizations participate. During its regular annual session, the Commission adopts about a hundred resolutions, decisions and Chairperson's statements on a wide range of human rights themes and countries

After with a three-and-a half-day 'high level segment' featuring speeches by high Government officials [the Commission](#) will make its way through topics such as human rights violations around the world; racism; rights of minorities, migrant workers and indigenous peoples; the rights of women and the prevention of violence against women; rights of children; the prevention of torture, disappearances, and summary executions; efforts to end religious intolerance; the promotion of economic, social and cultural rights; and the advancement of the right to development.

Who are the members of the 59th Session of Commission from Asia-Pacific?

The Commission is made up of [53 member states](#). This year's Commission has ten members from the Asia-Pacific region; Australia (2005), China (2005), India (2003), Japan (2005), Malaysia (2003), Pakistan (2004), Republic of Korea (2004), Sri Lanka (2005), Thailand (2003), and Viet Nam (2003).

The [officers of the Commission](#) are the Chairperson Najat Al-Hajjaji (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), the Vice Chairpersons Mike Smith (Australia), Prasad Kariyawasam (Sri Lanka), Jorje Voto-Bernalies (Peru) and the Rapporteur Brank Socanac (Croatia).

Who are the experts of the Commission?

The Commission has appointed 46 individuals to act as part-time experts on particular human rights themes or on the human rights situation in particular countries. These experts cover 26 themes and 11 individual countries and are usually appointed for between one and three years. The mandates are often renewed. The experts are appointed in their personal capacity and do not represent governments or non-governmental organisations. This year the Commission will hear the first report from the newest mandate created, the Special Rapporteur on the right to everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

In carrying out their mandates, [experts](#) research issues of concern, visit the countries involved, interact with governmental and non-governmental representatives, and receive and consider complaints from victims of human rights violations. They may also intervene with governments on behalf of such victims. They then report their findings, conclusions and recommendations to the Commission or the United Nations General Assembly. The experts' role also includes discussing their findings with the governments or parties involved with the aim of instigating change.

Are there any experts from Asia-Pacific?

Of the 46 experts appointed by the Commission nine are from the Asia-Pacific region. These are:

- **Abidin, Mr. Anuar** (Malaysia) Member of the Working Group on **Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances**
- **Coomaraswamy, Ms. Radhika*** (Sri Lanka) Special Rapporteur on **violence against women, its causes and consequences**
- **Cumaraswamy, Mr. Param*** (Malaysia) Special Rapporteur on the **independence of judges and lawyers**
- **Hossain, Mr. Kamal** (Bangladesh) Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in **Afghanistan**
- **Hunt, Mr. Paul** (New Zealand) Special Rapporteur on the **right to everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health**
- **Jahangir, Ms. Asma** (Pakistan) Special Rapporteur on **extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions**
- **Jilani, Ms. Hina** (Pakistan) Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the situation of **human rights defenders**
- **Sengupta, Mr. Arjun** (India) Independent expert on the **right to development**
- **Kothari, Mr. Miloon** (India) Special Rapporteur on **adequate housing** as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living

*retiring 2003

When will the Commission discuss specific issues and countries?

The Commission will run for 6 weeks. The first week will be largely devoted to a high level segment. This will be followed by 3 weeks of reporting to the Commission. Much of the final two weeks will be devoted to voting, and preparation of the report of the Commission.

Draft Calendar:

Racism.....	24 - 25 March
Right to development.....	26 March
Afghanistan, Myanmar, Timor Leste.....	27 - 31 March
Economic, social and cultural rights.....	1 - 2 April
Civil and political rights.....	3 - 7 April
Women.....	7 - 8 April
Children.....	8 - 9 April
Vulnerable groups.....	9 - 10 April
Indigenous peoples.....	10 - 11 April
Good governance, human rights defenders, impunity.....	14 April
Cambodia.....	14 - 15 April

For the Provisional Agenda 

For the Commission Calendar 

Some of the Reports being discussed at the Commission

Economic Social and Cultural Rights:

- Report of the Special Rapporteur on **adequate housing** (E/CN.4/2003/5) and his report on women's equal ownership of and access to and control over land and the equal rights to own property and to adequate housing (E/CN.4/2003/55);
- Report of the Special Rapporteur on the **right to food** E/CN.4/2003/54

- Report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on **globalisation** and its impact on the full enjoyment of human rights [E/CN.4/2003/49](#)
- Report of the Commission's Independent Expert on the effects of **structural adjustment policies and foreign debt** on the full enjoyment of human rights [E/CN.4/2003/54](#)
- Report of the Commission's Independent Expert on the question of human rights and **extreme poverty** [E/CN.4/2003/52](#)
- Report on the questions of the realization in all countries of the **economic, social and cultural rights** [E/CN.4/2003/46](#)
- Report of the new Special Rapporteur on right to everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of **physical and mental health** [E/CN.4/2003/58](#)
- Report of the Secretary-General on **access to medication** in the context of pandemics such as HIV-AIDS [E/CN.4/2003/48](#)
- Report on the protection of human rights in the context of **human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDs)** [E/CN.4/2003/81](#)

Civil and Political Rights:

- Report of the Special Rapporteur on the question of **torture** [E/CN.4/2003/68](#)
- Report of the Working Group on **arbitrary detention** [E/CN.4/2003/8](#)
- Report of the Working Group on enforced or involuntary **disappearances** [E/CN.4/2003/70](#)
- Report of the Special Rapporteur on **freedom of opinion and expression** [E/CN.4/2003/67](#)
- Report of the Special Rapporteur on **extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions** [E/CN.4/2003/3](#)
- Report of the Special rapporteur on elimination of all forms of **religious intolerance** (E/CN.4/2003/66);

Women, Children and Vulnerable Groups:

- Report of the Secretary-General on **trafficking in women and girls** [E/CN.4/2003/74](#)
- Report of the Special Rapporteur on the elimination of **violence against women** [E/CN.4/2003/75](#)
- Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on **children affected by armed conflict** (E/CN.4/2003/77)
- Report of the Special Rapporteur on the **sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography** [E/CN.4/2003/79](#)
- Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of **migrants** [E/CN.4/2003/85](#)
- Report of the Special Rapporteur on **disability** of the Commission for Social Development (E/CN.4/2002/4)
- Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of **indigenous people** [E/CN.4/2003/92/ Add.1](#)
- Report on the rights of persons belonging to **national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities** [E/CN.4/2003/82](#)

Asia-Pacific Country Reports:

- Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation in **Afghanistan** [E/CN.4/2003/39](#)
- Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in **Myanmar** [E/CN.4/2003/41](#) and Report of the Secretary-General prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 57/231 [E/CN.4/2003/33](#)
- Report of the High Commissioner for human rights situations in **Timor Leste** [E/CN.4/2003/37](#)
- Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the situation of human rights in **Cambodia** [E/CN.4/2003/114](#)
- Report of the Special rapporteur on the **independence of judges and lawyers: Mission Indonesia** [E/CN.4/2003/65/Add.2](#)

- Report on **Migrant Workers** of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants visit to the **Philippines** [E/CN.4/2003/85/Add.4](#)
- Report of the Working Group on **arbitrary detention** on their visit to **Australia** [E/CN.4/2003/8/Add.2](#)
- Report of the Special Rapporteur on the **right to education** on her mission to **Indonesia** [E/CN.4/2003/9/Add.1](#)
- Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of **indigenous people**: Mission to the **Philippines** ([E/CN.4/2003/90/Add.3](#))

Other Reports:

- Report of the High Commissioner for Human rights on the role of **good governance** in the promotion of human rights [E/CN.4/2003/103](#) and on practical approaches and activities to strengthen good governance (E/CN.4/2003/102)
- Report of the Secretary General on **impunity** [E/CN.4/2003/97](#)
- Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-general on **human rights defenders** [E/CN.4/2003/104](#) and [E/CN.4/2003/104/Add.4](#)
- Report of Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of **racism**, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerances (E/CN.4/2003/23, E/CN.4/2003/20 and [E/CN.4/2003/24](#));
- Report of the Working Group on the **Right to Development** [E/CN.4/2002/WG.18/6](#) [E/CN.4/2003/7](#)

For a complete list of Commission documents available on the internet ►

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