

United Nations Special Procedures

Communications

Some special procedures mechanisms intervene directly with Governments on specific allegations of violations of human rights that come within their mandates. The intervention can relate to a human rights violation that has already occurred, is ongoing, or which has a high risk of occurring. The process, in general, involves sending a letter to the concerned Government requesting information and comments on the allegation and, where necessary, asking that preventive or investigatory action be taken.

The decision to intervene is at the discretion of the special procedure mandate holder and will depend on the various criteria established by him or her, as well as the criteria laid out in the Code of Conduct. The criteria will generally relate to: the reliability of the source and the credibility of information received; the details provided; and the scope of the mandate. However, it must be emphasized that the criteria and the procedure involved in responding to an individual complaint vary, so it is necessary to submit a communication in accordance with the specific requirements established by each special procedure.

The following minimum information must be provided for all special procedures in order for the communication to be assessed:

- **Identification of the alleged victim(s);**
- **Identification of the alleged perpetrators of the violation;**
- **Identification of the person(s) or organization(s) submitting the communication (this information will be kept confidential);**
- **Date and place of incident**
- **A detailed description of the circumstances of the incident in which the alleged violation occurred.**

Other details pertaining to the specific alleged violation may be required by the relevant thematic mandates (e.g. past and present places of detention of the victim; any medical certificate issued to the victim; identification of witnesses to the alleged violation; any measures undertaken to seek redress locally, etc.).

Communications that contain abusive language or that are obviously politically motivated are not considered. Communications should describe the facts of the incident and the relevant details referred to above clearly and concisely. Communications should not be based solely on media reports.

To facilitate the consideration of reported violations, questionnaires relating to several mandates are available to persons wishing to report cases of alleged violations. It should, however, be noted that communications are considered even when they are not submitted in the form of a questionnaire.

For specific information concerning the individual communication procedures of

each special procedure mandate please consult the individual webpages of thematic mandates or country mandates.

After consulting the requirements established by each mandate for the submission of allegations, information can be submitted by fax to +41 22 917 90 06, by e-mail to urgent-action@ohchr.org , or by postal mail to:

OHCHR-UNOG ^{SEP}8-14 Avenue de la Paix ^{SEP}1211 Geneva 10 ^{SEP}Switzerland

Please specify which special procedure mechanism the information is addressed to in the subject line of the e-mail or fax, or on the cover of the envelope.

Source : <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/chr/special/communications.htm>