Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

206th session of the Governing Council

Extraordinary Virtual Session
1–3 November 2020

Results of the proceedings

Inter-Parliamentary Union – 2020

Inter-Parliamentary Union

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206th session of the Governing Council (Extraordinary virtual session)

1. Opening remarks

The 206th session of the Governing Council was held virtually from 1 to 3 November 2020. The session was chaired by the Acting President, Mr. Chen Guomin (China).

Mr. G. Chen, Acting President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, wished good health to all members and their families and welcomed everyone to the IPU's first ever virtual Governing Council. Business continuity was crucial during the pandemic and important decisions for the IPU lay ahead. Although COVID-19 was ravaging the world, it had also revealed an inspiring side to humanity. Governments, health workers and researchers had worked tirelessly, while communities everywhere had showed perseverance, courage, resolve and compassion in dark times. The world would confront and defeat the virus.

The IPU's 131-year history demonstrated the constant need for countries to work for peace and development. This was illustrated 75 years ago, when the world emerged from war, rejected power politics and united around the universal values of fairness and justice. In today's world, all countries were equal members of the international community and their peoples were entitled to a good life. As representatives of the people, IPU Members must deliver tangible benefits to them, including by finding solutions to the world's most serious problems through increased solidarity, better governance, greater openness and deeper cooperation.

Thanks to the Secretary General, the IPU had continued leading global parliamentary work. The Secretariat's diligence and shared purpose would make it possible to translate the Governing Council's meeting into successful outcomes.

2. Participation

Delegations from 145 Member Parliaments took part in the work of the Governing Council:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Eswatini, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Germany, Greece, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The full list of participants can be found on the IPU website (www.ipu.org/file/9913/download).

Of the 669 delegates who attended the extraordinary virtual session of the Governing Council, 458 were members of parliament. Those parliamentarians included 49 Presiding Officers, 21 Deputy Presiding Officers, 183 women MPs (40 %) and 121 young MPs (26.4 %).

3. Adoption of the Special Rules of Procedure for the virtual session of the Governing Council

The IPU Executive Committee had established a Working Group to examine the main criteria and modalities for the holding of a virtual session of the Governing Council and to propose special rules of procedure for the virtual session of the Governing Council. The first draft of the Special Rules –

prepared by the Secretariat in collaboration with an independent legal counsel, Professor Gian Luca Burci, from the Geneva Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies – was amended by the Working Group which then submitted it to the Executive Committee for approval.

Following its approval, the Executive Committee submitted the Special Rules to the IPU Member Parliaments. Except for one Member, the Parliament of Pakistan (which had expressed reservations), no Member Parliament had any objections to the Special Rules. Having concluded that there was overwhelming support for the Special Rules of Procedure, the Executive Committee considered them adopted and submitted them to the Governing Council.

The Council formally adopted the Special Rules of Procedure to regulate the conduct of virtual sessions of the Governing Council (see page 16).

4. Election of the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

The Governing Council elected Mr. Duarte Pacheco (Portugal) as the IPU President for a three-year term ending in October/November 2023.

Four candidates ran for the post of the IPU President: Ms. Salma Ataullahjan (Canada), Mr. Duarte Pacheco (Portugal), Mr. Akmal Saidov (Uzbekistan) and Mr. Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani (Pakistan).

Prior to the election, a hearing with all four candidates took place on 21 October. The candidates had the opportunity to set forth their vision for the Organization and to answer questions from the wider IPU Membership.

In view of the virtual format of the extraordinary session of the Governing Council, the elections were held remotely. Civica Election Services (CES) had been selected to provide an online platform offering high levels of security, secrecy, reliability, auditability and trust.

The IPU Presidential election was conducted in keeping with the Special Rules of Procedure adopted by the Governing Council to govern the virtual sessions of the Governing Council. During a 24-hour window, 394 parliamentarians from 142 IPU Member Parliaments cast their vote remotely.

The Governing Council appointed Mr. J.F. Mudenda (Zimbabwe) and Mr. J.P. Letelier (Chile) as Tellers, with the responsibility of ascertaining the results of the election. An independent auditor – the United Nations International Computing Centre (UNICC) - verified the integrity of the election process and outcome, paying particular attention to the secrecy and security of the ballot, accessibility to the voting platform, and counting of votes cast. Voter turnout was 97.04 per cent. With four candidates on the ballot, the new IPU President Mr. Pacheco was elected with 56 per cent of the vote in a single round of voting. A second round that had been provided for did not take place as Mr. Pacheco had obtained the requisite absolute majority of the votes cast to be elected President.

The outgoing President, Ms. G. Cuevas Barron, was made an Honorary President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

5. IPU Honorary President's report

The Governing Council took note of the Honorary President's report on her overall activities during her presidency from 2017 to 2020. Ms. G. Cuevas Barron identified the following as priorities: translation of international commitments into national realities; attainment of sustainable development and the 2030 Agenda, in particular through the contribution of parliamentarians in budgetary decisions; making the IPU a more inclusive organization and advocating for the inclusion of women and young people in parliament; fostering transparency in the IPU; ensuring parliamentary engagement with the United Nations processes and forums; efficiency in the use of the IPU budget; innovating to meet the challenges posed by the twenty-first century. Her report would be sent out to all the Member Parliaments and individual parliamentarians in the IPU Secretariat's mailing lists.

The Acting President and the Secretary General of the IPU, the Chairs of the Geopolitical Groups, the President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians and the President of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, as well as representatives of other Member Parliaments, took the floor to express their appreciation for the work and commitment of the outgoing President and to wish her well in all of her future endeavours.

6. Financial results 2019

The Governing Council considered the Financial Report and Audited Financial Statements for 2019.

The financial results for 2019 were introduced by Ms. C. Widegren (Sweden), Chair of the Sub-Committee on Finance. She reported that the External Auditor had expressed that the financial statements were of high quality and that collaboration with the IPU finance team had been excellent. The Swiss Federal Audit Office had been able to issue an unqualified audit opinion. During the meeting of 2 April 2020 between the External Auditor, Mr. D. Monnot (Swiss Federal Audit Office), the Internal Auditor, Mr. R. del Picchia (France), the Chair of the Sub-Committee on Finance and the Secretary General, the External Auditor confirmed that the IPU was in sound financial health and that there were no new audit recommendations to be made. No problems had arisen during his work and he reported an overall positive audit exercise, which had taken place under very good conditions. Ms. Widegren reported that the Swiss Federal Audit Office had also agreed to carry out an additional and separate audit on the grant of the Swedish Government Agency, Sida. The auditors had successfully completed this work and expressed a clean opinion. No recommendations had been issued.

This was the last time the Swiss Federal Audit Office would be auditing the IPU's accounts. They had been doing so for seven years. Ms. Widegren therefore gave a special note of gratitude to the External Auditor for the quality and added value of their work, and the excellent support from the Audit team to the IPU Secretariat. The Executive Committee commended the IPU Secretary General for the good financial results and was pleased to endorse the audit results and financial statements. The Executive Committee recommended that the Governing Council approve the financial statements for 2019.

The Internal Auditor's report was submitted by Mr. del Picchia (France) who confirmed that the IPU accounts were well kept and that the financial statements were a fair representation of the IPU's financial situation at the end of 2019. He also confirmed that, in general terms, the IPU was a well-managed organization and that its finances were sound, which was to the credit of the Secretary General and his team.

The budget had been implemented in keeping with the directions established by the Sub-Committee on Finance. The Members' contributions had been set according to commitments made, and had remained unchanged compared to 2018, while the increase in revenue of CHF 11,450 was due to the addition of a new Member: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The total amount of voluntary contributions earned was CHF 3 million, a similar level to 2018. The voluntary contributions helped finance programmes without encumbering the assessed contributions. Mr. del Picchia expressed his gratitude to the generous donors but underlined that one should remain vigilant so as not to create a situation that would compromise the IPU's independence.

The Internal Auditor recommended to the Governing Council that the financial statements for 2019 be approved.

The Governing Council took note of the reports of the Chair of the Sub-Committee on Finance and the Internal Auditor and approved the Secretary General's financial administration of the IPU and the financial results for 2019.

7. Financial situation

The Governing Council received a report on the financial situation of the IPU as at 30 June 2020 and an updated list of unpaid assessed contributions. As at 31 October 2020, the arrears of the current year's contributions totalled CHF 1.4 million. Despite the challenges faced by many parliaments, arrears of contributions were at levels that were not unusual for the time of year. The Secretary General expressed his thanks to all those Members who paid their contributions regularly and on time. The full membership rights of Mauritania had been reinstated following partial payment of former arrears.

The Secretary General reported that the current financial situation of the IPU was sound despite the adverse global situation. The Governing Council took note that the expenditure of the IPU was running below target for the first half of 2020. Most of the savings had been generated from the cancellation or postponement of physical meetings due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the reduction in travel-related costs across all objectives. This would continue in a similar pattern until the end of the year and any savings generated would be credited to the Working Capital Fund in the usual way. The return on investments was low due to poor market performance so far in 2020 but was expected to stabilize and improve in 2021.

The Governing Council also took note of the report on mobilization of voluntary funding prepared by the Secretariat.

8. 2021 draft consolidated budget

The Governing Council was presented with the draft consolidated budget for 2021. Reporting on behalf of the Executive Committee, Ms. C. Widegren (Sweden) explained that the draft budget had been prepared under the supervision of the Sub-Committee on Finance and was in accordance with its guidance. The Sub-Committee had met several times to discuss drafts of the budget, during which time it had studied detailed forecasts and analyses, and received explanations from the Secretariat. The Sub-Committee wanted to use this budget to encourage Member Parliaments to step up their engagement for multilateralism, democracy and human rights in an efficient, modern and flexible manner.

In the current challenging times, there would be no increase in contributions for any Member in 2021. Voluntary funding was expected to be at a similar level to 2020, with some new grants anticipated. Ms. Widegren encouraged all Members to pursue any domestic opportunities to fundraise for the IPU.

The budget placed more focus on the effective use of communications and new technologies, and on remote working, with support given to more virtual meetings, virtual regional seminars, hybrid and inclusive meetings.

With fewer physical meetings being held and less travel taking place, any savings would continue to flow into the IPU's Working Capital Fund reserves as usual. The Fund was a very important component of the IPU's financial health and resilience that allowed the Organization to react to lean times. The target level of reserves set by the governing bodies in 2006 – half of the operating budget – was yet to be reached.

In 2021, the current Strategy would expire and a new Strategy would be designed and adopted for 2022 and beyond, signalling a new start for the IPU. The budget made financial provision for that very important work which would lead to even greater focus on IPU core values and long-term commitments on environmental impact, gender mainstreaming, human rights-based approaches, democracy and freedom.

The IPU was committed to exercising the highest standards of transparency and accountability. The approval of the budget would enable the Organization to drive forward its core values of multilateralism, human rights, gender equality, democracy and freedom, and also to become an international leader in digital democracy and parliamentary diplomacy.

The Governing Council approved the 2021 budget.

9. Elections to the Executive Committee

The Governing Council elected the following two members to the Executive Committee:

- Ms. B. Argimón (Uruguay) from the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean for a four-year term to replace Ms. Y. Ferrer Gómez (Cuba), whose term had ended.
- Ms. L. Fehlmann Rielle (Switzerland), from the Twelve Plus Group, to replace Ms. M. Kiener Nellen (Switzerland) who was no longer a Member of Parliament. She will complete the latter's term that expires in October 2021.

10. Brief report by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians

The Governing Council endorsed the draft decisions put forward by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians concerning 184 parliamentarians from 13 countries (Human rights decisions adopted by the Governing Council, see page 36). The Council noted the reservations of the delegations of Egypt, Israel and Zimbabwe concerning the cases in their respective countries.

11. Brief reports on the outcome of the virtual segments of the 13th Summit of Women Speakers and the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament

The 13th Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament and the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament were organized by the IPU in close cooperation with the United Nations and the Austrian Parliament.

Ms. A. Eder-Gitschthaler, President of the Federal Council of Austria, presented a brief report on the 13th Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament (17 and 18 August 2020). The event had brought together 28 women Speakers of Parliament from 26 countries under the theme *Women's parliamentary leadership in a time of COVID-19 and recovery*. Marking the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Summit took stock of the progress made and renewed the commitments made by women Speakers towards fulfilling those goals.

As a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the women Speakers called for putting women's empowerment and gender equality at the centre of the crisis response and recovery plans. Building back better required strong legal frameworks to eliminate gender discrimination; to guarantee gender equality; and oversee their effective implementation through strong monitoring and gender-responsive budgeting. Parliamentary leaders and members were urged to condemn and sanction any acts of harassment, intimidation and violence against women in parliament. In preparation for the next Summit, it was recommended that a sub-committee of women Speakers be established within the Preparatory Committee of the next World Conference of Speakers of Parliament.

Mr. J.F. Mudenda, Speaker of the National Assembly of Zimbabwe, presented a brief report on the virtual session of the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament (19 and 20 August 2020) which had brought together over 115 Speakers of Parliament. The overall theme of the Conference was *Parliamentary leadership for more effective multilateralism that delivers peace and sustainable development for the people and planet*. The Conference concluded in a robust Declaration on parliamentary leadership for effective multilateralism that delivered peace and sustainable development. The Declaration was formally presented in the United Nations General Assembly and circulated among all the UN Member States. The full report and video highlights of the Conference were available on the IPU website. All Speakers would be receiving the publication shortly.

Speakers and distinguished experts contributed on topics spanning effective multilateralism, parliamentary diplomacy, climate change, sustainable development, health, youth and gender, democracy, human mobility, countering terrorism, and science and technology. Through an interactive debate, five panels and five reports, the Conference had provided a framework for expertise and parliamentary deliberations. The Conference had also been an important platform to deepen parliamentary ties with the United Nations and the IPU's other partners.

A comprehensive publication on the virtual sessions of the 13th Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament and the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament is available on the IPU website.

12. Future inter-parliamentary meetings

The Council approved the list of future meetings and other activities to be funded by the IPU's regular budget and by external sources (see page 34).

The Council took note of the recommendation of the Executive Committee to consider Geneva as the venue for the 142nd Assembly, in May/June 2021, following the request by the Moroccan parliamentary authorities to postpone the Assembly they had offered to host in Marrakech in March 2021.

The Council reconfirmed that the 143rd Assembly would be held in Rwanda (November 2021). It also took note of the invitation by the Parliament of Indonesia to host an IPU Assembly in April 2022.

In preparation for the in-person session of the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament in Vienna in 2021, the Governing Council endorsed the nominations of the Geopolitical Groups to fill the vacancies on the Preparatory Committee. The composition of the Committee is available on page 25.

13. Questions relating to the IPU membership: the specific situation in Mali

The Governing Council was invited to review the situation in Mali and take a decision on its membership of the IPU.

The Secretary General recalled that the military coup in August 2020 had been the culmination of an ongoing cycle of instability fueled by popular dissatisfaction over the Malian President and Government's handling of an insurgency in the north and intercommunity tensions in the centre of Mali. After elections in Spring 2020, the Constitutional Court had disqualified some parliamentarians and replaced them with MPs loyal to the then President. Widespread protests calling for the President's resignation had followed. Mediation by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) had recommended a national unity government, but to no avail. In August, the military had staged a coup in which the then President, Prime Minister and others had been arrested, and a three-year transitional period of rule had been announced. ECOWAS had imposed measures including trade sanctions, the IPU had condemned the seizure of power by force, and the Secretary General had approached the new Malian authorities to understand more about the situation.

Since August 2020, the Malian authorities had engaged with ECOWAS, and agreed to an 18-month transition process, consulted all parts of Malian society, adopted a transitional charter, formed a government of national unity, established a transitional national council, released prisoners (including the former President, the former Prime Minister and former parliamentary Speaker). They had requested that the IPU governing bodies both show understanding and engage with the new authorities in efforts to restore constitutional norms, including by supporting the work of the transitional national council which would serve as the legislative body during the transition. International partners including ECOWAS, the African Union and the UN Security Council had acknowledged this progress and encouraged Mali to revert quickly to constitutional rule.

At its meetings on 31 August and 30 October, the Executive Committee had noted the IPU practice of supporting Members during transitional periods if they were clearly aiming to restore constitutional order. In light of current developments, the Executive Committee recommended that the Governing Council maintain Mali's membership and encourage the IPU to work with the Malian authorities to restore constitutional norms as swiftly as possible.

The Executive Committee had instructed the Secretary General to report regularly to the Governing Bodies on progress made against a road map to be agreed with the transitional authorities.

The Governing Council endorsed the recommendation.

14. IPU Secretariat Activities Report – Pandemic Period 2020

The Secretary General presented a brief report which demonstrated the IPU's resilience and ability to adapt to new and unexpected situations (see page 26).

15. Concluding remarks

At the concluding sitting on 3 November, the Acting IPU President, Mr. Chen Guomin, reminded members of the historic nature of the online session. Despite the many challenges, IPU Members had been able to meet for three busy days and take important decisions about the Organization's functioning and governance.

The high level of participation in the Governing Council session had been impressive: 145 national parliaments had registered delegations, with 410 Governing Council members. Participation in the remote elections for the new IPU President (97 per cent of Governing Council members eligible to vote) had also been remarkable. This was testimony to the interest and commitment of IPU Members to the important mission and work of the organization.

Parliamentary leadership was called upon on a number of issues. The Members must urge their respective national authorities to mobilize all resources to make a science-based and targeted response to the COVID-19 pandemic and enhance solidarity and deepen cooperation to that end. Parliamentarians must also help maintain peace and promote common development. The green revolution must move faster and countries must take decisive steps to honor the Paris Agreement. What was needed was more parliamentary diplomacy, more multilateralism, more engagement of all Members to achieve the measures and recommendations of the Governing Council and deliver tangible benefits to the people parliaments represented.

The acting President thanked everyone and declared the 206th session of the Governing Council closed.

284th session of the Executive Committee (virtual meetings)

1. Debates and decisions

The Executive Committee held its 284th session virtually on 31 August and 30 October 2020.

The President of the IPU, Ms. G. Cuevas Barron (Mexico) chaired the meeting on 31 August, and Mr. Chen Guomin (China), following the end of the mandate of the IPU President, chaired the meeting on 30 October as Acting President. The following members took part in the meetings:

Mr. D. McGuinty (Canada), Mr. G. Gali Ngothé (Chad), Mr. J.P. Letelier (Chile), Mr. Chen Guomin (China) replaced by Mr. Chen Fuli on 30 October, Mr. M.R. Rabbani (Pakistan), Ms. A.D. Mergane Kanouté (Senegal), Mr. M. Grujic (Serbia) on 30 October, Ms. C. Widegren (Sweden), Ms. L. Fehlmann Rielle (Switzerland), Ms. P. Krairiksh (Thailand), Ms. E. Anyakun (Uganda) on 30 October, Mr. A. Saidov (Uzbekistan), who recused himself from the sitting of 30 October to avoid any conflict of interest as he was a candidate for the IPU Presidency, Mr. J.F. Mudenda (Zimbabwe), and Ms. S. Kihika (Kenya) in her capacity as the President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians on 30 October.

Mr. A. Abdel Aal (Egypt), Ms. Y. Ferrer Gómez (Cuba), and Mr. M. Bouva (Suriname), in his capacity as President of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, were absent.

Mr. M. Chungong, Secretary General of the IPU, took part in both sittings; Mr. G.L. Burci, legal counsel, attended on 31 August; and Mr. F. Maggiore, independent auditor from the United Nations International Computing Centre (UNICC), participated on 30 October.

The Executive Committee heard the report of the working group that it had mandated to reflect on possible arrangements and make concrete proposals for the organization of the virtual session of the Governing Council.

The Executive Committee noted and endorsed the working group's recommendation that the virtual session of the Governing Council should be limited to pressing matters including: the adoption of the Special Rules of Procedure; the 2019 financial results and the 2021 draft consolidated budget; the election of the IPU President; and the election of two new members of the Executive Committee. It recommended that additional items be added to the virtual agenda such as: the end-of-term report of the outgoing President; brief reports on the outcome of the 13th Summit of Women Speakers and the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, and on the work of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians.

The Executive Committee concurred with the working group that the Special Rules of Procedure, as a regulating document for the major issues addressed by November's historic Governing Council session, should be guided by realism, clarity and flexibility.

The Executive Committee heard the detailed explanation of the working group's Chair on a note about the remote voting process, and took note of a number of related recommendations including: establishing the deadline for the registration of candidates and members of the Governing Council at 15 days before the opening of the session; using the list of members of the Governing Council at the registration deadline to establish the quorum and verify gender balance of delegations; requesting IPU Members to register three (mixed) members of the Governing Council by the registration deadline and informing them that single-sex delegations would only be entitled to one vote; appointing an authority to validate any cases of force majeure; contracting a specialist election provider to provide an online voting platform as the primary method of voting, and making available a secondary back-up method (phone or SMS); contracting an independent auditor to provide additional technical verification of the process; and nominating two Tellers who would be endorsed by the Governing Council to ascertain the results of the ballot. Mr. Mudenda (Zimbabwe) and Mr. Letelier (Chile) were nominated as the Tellers.

The Executive Committee agreed that the Special Rules of Procedure should be amended to make additional provision for better conditions regarding the remote voting process. The conditions should be based on accessibility, confidence, secrecy, authentication, independence and time zone inclusiveness. It was recommended that the Special Rules of Procedure be adopted at the first sitting of the Governing Council.

Having acknowledged that it was of the utmost importance to open all possible communications channels for candidates to express themselves, the Executive Committee recommended that all necessary information should be made available to candidates as soon as they were registered. In addition, it believed that candidates should have the chance to give a 10-minute presentation at the session of the Governing Council before voting began. The Executive Committee recommended that the Secretariat organize other presentations with candidates in the 15 days running up to that Council session.

Taking into account the constraints (including lockdown) of the current COVID-19 pandemic that prevented candidates from campaigning, the Executive Committee recommended that the Secretariat assist the candidates by providing them with a number of facilities, including a platform for hearings with members and sessions with the geopolitical groups, and the IPU directory of Members for the candidates to use in their campaigns.

The Executive Committee took note of the Secretary General's update on preparations for the Governing Council. The Committee also expressed its appreciation for the Secretariat's successful arrangements with a view to the virtual session of the Governing Council.

The Executive Committee heard the presentation of the independent auditor, Mr. F. Maggiore (UNICC), on the technical report of his analysis of the voting platform and the test election of 20 October.

The Executive Committee was briefed on and took note of the virtual segment of the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament and on the preparations under way for the in-person Conference in 2021 in Vienna as recommended by the Preparatory Committee. It invited all parliamentarians around the world to study the Conference publication and reflect on the key outcome messages, which should spur them towards working together for a better world. The Executive Committee took note of the nominations made by the geopolitical groups to fill the vacancies on the Preparatory Committee and invited the groups who had not yet made nominations for all their vacancies to do so.

The Executive Committee also took note of the report on the virtual segment of the 13th Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament. It invited parliaments to scale up efforts towards achieving the main objectives of the Beijing Declaration.

The Executive Committee approved the list of future inter-parliamentary meetings presented by the Secretary General. It took note of the request by the Moroccan parliamentary authorities to postpone its hosting of what was scheduled to be the 142nd IPU Assembly due to COVID-19 challenges that the country was facing. The Committee also took note of the alternative proposed by the Secretary General to organize that Assembly in Geneva in May or June 2021 in line with the availability of the International Conference Centre of Geneva.

2. Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) between the IPU and other organizations

The Secretary General briefed the Executive Committee about ongoing arrangements related to the MoU with the Office of the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on Sexual Violence against Women in Conflict, and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Having recognized the importance of collaboration with these two United Nations organizations, the Executive Committee approved the MoUs and recommended that they be submitted to the Governing Council for final endorsement, which could be obtained by correspondence.

3. Questions relating to IPU membership: situation in Mali

The Secretary General briefed the Executive Committee on the situation in Mali. The Committee took note of the current political developments in the country, as well as the international and regional current trends of supporting the ongoing transitional process, and encouraging the new Malian authorities to work speedily to conclude that process and return to full constitutional civilian order. The Executive Committee therefore recommended that Mali's membership be maintained and that the IPU should work with the Malian transitional authorities towards a speedy return to normal constitutional rule. The Executive Committee instructed the Secretary General to implement this recommendation and to report to the Governing Bodies on a regular basis in line with a road map to be agreed with Mali's transitional authorities.

4. Sub-Committee on Finance

The Sub-Committee on Finance had met on 29 October 2020 to prepare and facilitate the Executive Committee's consideration of the draft programme and budget for 2021, the financial situation of the IPU, the voluntary funding situation, and the selection of an External Auditor. The Chair of the Sub-Committee, Ms. C. Widegren (Sweden), made a full presentation of the 2021 budget document, which encouraged Member Parliaments to step up their engagement for multilateralism, democracy and human rights in an efficient, modern and flexible manner. The Sub-Committee had thoroughly reviewed the document and guided the preparation of the budget during the course of the year. The Executive Committee thanked the Sub-Committee on Finance and the Secretariat for their work, and recommended the 2021 budget and scale of contributions to the Governing Council for adoption.

The Acting President recalled that, at its session on 18 June 2020, the Executive Committee had already recommended that the Governing Council should approve the Secretary General's financial administration of the IPU and the financial results for 2019. This would be put before the Governing Council at its upcoming session.

The Secretary General and his colleagues updated the Executive Committee on the financial situation of the IPU and the mobilization of voluntary funding. Despite the global crisis, the IPU's financial health and resilience remained strong. Despite the challenges faced by many parliaments, arrears of contributions were at a level that was typical for the time of year. New voluntary funding agreements were anticipated following substantial pledges of support from China and the United Arab Emirates amongst others.

The Chair of the Sub-Committee briefed the Executive Committee on the process of selecting a new External Auditor following the end of the mandate of the Swiss Federal Audit Office. The Indian Supreme Audit Institution had a team stationed in Geneva that already audited a number of international organizations. It had been identified as the best choice for the IPU, providing a very professional audit proposal under IPSAS rules at a similar low cost to that of the Swiss auditors. The Executive Committee voted to approve the selection of the Indian Supreme Audit Institution, as the IPU's External Auditor for the financial years 2020–2022, with one objection noted from Pakistan.

Subsidiary bodies of the Governing Council

1. Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians

The Committee held its 162nd session in virtual format. The Committee met on 22, 23, 26 and 27 October for four sittings of three hours each. The Committee continued its exchanges in writing until 31 October, the day on which it adopted its decisions.

Mr. N. Bako-Arifari (Benin), President, Ms. D. Solórzano (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), Vice-President, Mr. A. Alaradi (Bahrain), Ms. L. Dumont (France), Ms. A. Reynoso (Mexico), and Mr. A. Caroni (Switzerland) took part in the 162nd session. Ms. J. Mukoda-Zabwe (Uganda) was unable to attend.

At its session, the Committee examined the situation of 297 parliamentarians in 19 countries, of which 12 concerned new complaints concerning 70 parliamentarians. The Committee also held two hearings with complainants and other interested parties.

The Committee submitted decisions to the Governing Council for adoption concerning 184 parliamentarians from the following countries: Belarus, Brazil, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Gabon, Mongolia, Palestine/Israel, Philippines, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), and Zimbabwe.

Elections and appointments

1. IPU President

Four candidates ran for the post of IPU President: Ms. S. Ataullahjan (Canada), Mr. D. Pacheco (Portugal), Mr. A. Saidov (Uzbekistan), and Mr. M.S. Sanjrani (Pakistan).

In the single round of voting, Mr. Pacheco obtained 222 votes, followed by Mr. Saidov with 67 votes, Ms. Ataullahjan with 53 votes, and Mr. Sanjrani with 52 votes.

The Governing Council consequently elected Mr. D. Pacheco (Portugal) as President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union for a three-year term ending in October/November 2023.

The outgoing President, Ms. G. Cuevas Barron (Mexico), was made Honorary President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

2. Executive Committee

The Governing Council elected the following two members to the Executive Committee:

- *Group of Latin America and the Caribbean*
  Ms. B. Argimón (Uruguay) to replace Ms. Y. Ferrer Gómez (Cuba), whose term had ended.
- *Twelve Plus Group*
  Ms. L. Fehlmann Rielle (Switzerland) to replace Ms. M. Kiener Nellen (Switzerland) who is no longer a member of parliament. She will complete the latter's term which expires in October 2021.

3. Preparatory Committee for the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament

The Governing Council approved the following nominations to the Preparatory Committee:

African Group
- Ms. C. Gotani Hara (Malawi)

Arab Group
- Ms. F. Zainal (Bahrain)

Asia-Pacific Group
- Ms. P. Maharani (Indonesia)

Group of Latin America and the Caribbean
- Ms. B. Argimón (Uruguay)
- Mr. M. Nadir (Guyana)

Twelve Plus Group
- Ms. S. D'Hose (Belgium)
- Mr. W. Schäuble (Germany)
- Mr. S.J. Sigfússon (Iceland)
- Ms. T. Wilhelmsen Trøen (Norway)

4. Internal Auditors for the 2021 accounts

The Governing Council appointed the following Internal Auditor for the 2021 accounts:

- Ms. S. Moulengui-Mouele (Gabon)

5. External Auditor for 2020-2022

The Executive Committee appointed the Indian Supreme Audit Institution as the External Auditor of the IPU's accounts for 2020-2022.

Media and communications

There were two big communication moments during the last Governing Council. The announcement of the result of the Presidential election and the latest decisions on the human rights of parliamentarians. Two press releases were issued in English, French, Spanish, and Arabic, and were sent to thousands of journalists around the world. The press releases also generated media coverage, notably in international outlets such as Voice of America and Deutsche Welle as well as the national press in the countries concerned. The Secretariat also communicated extensively on the IPU social media platforms – Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Flickr garnering significant impressions and engagement.

Agenda of the 206th session of the Governing Council

Adopted by the IPU Governing Council at its 206th session (Extraordinary virtual session, 1 November 2020)

1. Adoption of the agenda

2. Adoption of the Special Rules of Procedure for the virtual session of the Governing Council

The Special Rules of Procedure have been prepared by the Working Group tasked with preparing the virtual session of the Governing Council, with the support of the IPU Secretariat and the independent Legal Counsel, and further amended and endorsed by the Executive Committee. They are designed to adapt certain existing Rules, which will be temporarily suspended, to the specificities of a virtual session. The Special Rules of Procedure are being circulated to the full membership of the IPU and will be adopted at the first sitting of the virtual session.

3. Approval of the summary records of the 205th session of the Governing Council (Belgrade, October 2019)

The summary records were sent to all Members on 28 January 2020.

4. IPU Honorary President's report

The outgoing President will present a report on her overall activity during her three-year term as President of the IPU.

5. Election of the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union
(Article 19 of the Statutes and Rules 6, 7 and 8 of the Rules of the Governing Council as well as the Special Rules of Procedure)

(a) The candidates to the IPU Presidency will each be given 10 minutes to address the Governing Council, to present themselves and their vision for the Organization.

(b) The Governing Council will elect a new President to replace Ms. Gabriela Cuevas Barron (Mexico), who will conclude her term of office on 19 October 2020.

6. Financial results for 2019

The Governing Council will be informed of the financial results for 2019 and will be asked to approve the accounts. It will also elect the internal auditors for the 2021 accounts.

7. 2021 draft consolidated budget

The Governing Council will be invited to adopt the draft budget, accompanied by the IPU work programme for 2021.

8. Elections to the Executive Committee

The Governing Council will elect two new members of the Executive Committee. In light of the fact that the membership of the other statutory bodies of the IPU is determined by the geopolitical groups, it is proposed that the mandates of other IPU office holders be extended to such a time as elections can take place (142nd IPU Assembly, Marrakech, 14-18 March 2021).

9. Brief report by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians

The Governing Council will be invited to hear a brief report on the activities of the Committee since October 2019 and to adopt the relevant decisions on the human rights of parliamentarians.

10. Brief report on the outcome of the virtual segment of the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament

The Governing Council will be briefed on the outcome of the virtual segment of this high-level event and on the preparations under way for the in-person Conference to be held in Vienna in 2021.

11. Future Inter-Parliamentary meetings

The Governing Council will be invited to approve the list of Future inter-parliamentary meetings scheduled for end of 2020 onwards.

12. Questions relating to the IPU membership: the specific situation in Mali

Following the coup d'état on 18 August, the National Assembly of Mali has been dissolved. The Governing Council will be called upon to review the situation and take a decision on Mali's membership within the IPU.

13. Other business

Special Rules of Procedure to regulate the conduct of virtual sessions of the Governing Council[1]

Adopted by the IPU Governing Council at its 206th session (Extraordinary virtual session, 1 November 2020)

PREAMBLE

The Rules of the Governing Council shall continue to apply in full, except to the extent that they are inconsistent with these Special Rules of Procedure, in which case the decision of the Governing Council to adopt these Special Rules of Procedure shall constitute a decision to suspend the relevant Rules of the Governing Council to the extent necessary in accordance with Rule 45.3 of the Rules of the Governing Council.

The Rules of the Governing Council that shall be suspended are:
Rule 2 with regard to substitute members
Rule 3 with regard to participation by Associate Members
Rule 4 with regard to participation by observers
Rule 7 with regard to the deadline for communication of candidatures for the post of President of the IPU
Rule 13 with regard to requests for supplementary agenda items
Rules 14–20 with regard to the submission of motions, draft resolutions, amendments and sub-amendments
Rule 23 with regard to decisions on limiting speaking time
Rule 28 with regard to substitute members voting
Rule 29 with regard to voting by show of hands or standing vote
Rule 32 with regard to requests for division of proposals
Rule 34 with regard to the establishment of the quorum

1. AGENDA

1.1 The provisional agenda of a virtual session of the Governing Council shall be determined by the Executive Committee and shall be limited to essential items for the governance and programme of work of the Organization.

1.2 It will not be possible for members of the Governing Council to propose supplementary items pursuant to Rule 13 of the Rules of the Governing Council.

2. ATTENDANCE

2.1 Attendance by Members shall be through a secured access to videoconference or other electronic means allowing representatives to hear other participants and to address the meeting remotely as appropriate.

2.2 For the purpose of attendance and voting, the gender inclusiveness of delegations of Members under Rule 1 of the Rules of the Governing Council will be assessed on the basis of the list submitted by each Member for the purpose of registration by the deadline indicated below.

2.3 Participation by IPU Members in the Governing Council is limited to titular members. It will not be possible to appoint substitute members under Rules 2 and 28 of the Rules of the Governing Council except in case of force majeure preventing a titular member from attending the session. The existence of such a situation must be certified by the Speaker of the parliament or the President of the IPU Group concerned through a written communication to the Secretary General.

[1] In these Rules, whenever the words "President", "Vice-President", "delegate", "representative", "member" and "observer" are used, they should be construed as referring to both women and men.

3. REGISTRATION

3.1 Registration will take place through an online system in accordance with established practice. Each IPU Member participating in the session will communicate the name, gender and contact details of its representatives as well as the scan of an official letter from the Speaker of parliament or the President of the IPU Group.

3.2 The deadline for registration shall be 15 days before the opening of the session. No further changes to the composition of delegations will be possible after that date, subject to Rule 2.3 of these Special Rules of Procedure.

4. QUORUM

The number of registered members of the Governing Council at the registration deadline indicated in Rule 3.2 of these Special Rules of Procedure shall be used to establish the quorum.

5. ADDRESSING THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

5.1 Members are invited to submit written statements in either English or French (the official languages of the Organization) with an indication of the agenda item to which they refer, in advance of the opening of the session of the Governing Council. Written statements shall be in lieu of live interventions. These shall be posted on a dedicated web page and shall form part of the official records of the session.

5.2 Members may also submit pre-recorded video statements with an indication of the agenda item to which they refer, in advance of the opening of the session.

5.3 During the virtual session, statements by members shall be limited to two minutes.

5.4 Any member wishing to take the floor should signal their wish to speak. A member wishing to raise a point of order in relation to a statement made during the session should signal their intention to do so. The President will rule on the point of order in accordance with Rule 22 of the Rules of the Governing Council.

6. MEETINGS

All virtual meetings of the Governing Council shall be open only to Member Parliaments of the IPU. All business during a virtual session shall be conducted in plenary meetings.

7. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Motions or draft resolutions may be submitted in accordance with Rule 14 and will be subject to Rule 15 of the Rules of the Governing Council. Members should make every effort to arrive at an agreed proposal through informal consultations. In view of the limitations imposed by a virtual session, Rules 16–20 of the Rules of the Governing Council are suspended.

8. DECISION-MAKING

All decisions of the Governing Council taken in a virtual session shall be, as far as possible, adopted by consensus. In view of the virtual nature of the session and of technical limitations, if a vote is required on matters other than the election of the President and the members of the Executive Committee, it shall be taken by roll call in accordance with normal practice. In the event of a roll-call vote, should any member fail to cast a vote for any reason during the roll call, that member shall be called upon a second time after the conclusion of the initial roll call. Should the member fail to cast a vote on the second roll-call, the member shall be recorded as absent.

9. WRITTEN SILENCE PROCEDURE

9.1 The following written silence procedure will apply in respect of any proposal that the President or Executive Committee determines, following informal consultations, is suitable for adoption without further discussion by the Governing Council but cannot be adopted during the virtual session because of lack of time or for any other reason as determined by the President or Executive Committee.

9.2 At the request of the President or Executive Committee, the Secretary General will transmit to Members any such proposal for consideration under this written silence procedure.

9.3 The communication will contain the text of the proposal(s) to be considered under this written silence procedure and will set a date for the receipt of any objection. Any such objection shall be conveyed in writing, including by email, and addressed to the Secretary General. The objection must have been received within 15 days from the date of dispatch of the communication.

9.4 In the absence of the receipt by the stipulated deadline of 15 days of written objections from one third or more of Members, the proposal concerned will be considered as having been validly adopted by the Governing Council.

9.5 The Secretary General will communicate the outcome of the written silence procedure to all Members as soon as possible after the set deadline referred to above. In the case of a proposal that is adopted pursuant to the written silence procedure, the date of the Secretary General's communication to that effect will be date of adoption of the proposal.

9.6 Without prejudice to the above, a Member may explain its position in respect of a proposal that is subject to the written silence procedure by submitting a written statement relating thereto, for posting on the IPU website. Written statements should be received by the Secretary General by the date set for receipt of objections. Written statements will be made available on the IPU website for information purposes only. They will appear as submitted and in the language(s) of submission. Submission of a written statement in accordance with this paragraph will not be considered as an objection.

10. ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT

10.1 The President of the IPU shall be elected in accordance with Rules 6–8 of the Rules of the Governing Council except as provided in these Special Rules of Procedure. The Secretary General shall announce the quorum before voting begins in accordance with Rule 34 of the Rules of the Governing Council.

10.2 Prior to the start of the voting process, the candidates duly registered for the post of IPU President will be invited to briefly address the Governing Council, to present themselves and their vision for the Organization. Hearings, open to the IPU Members, will also be organized with the candidates in the two weeks leading up to the election.

10.3 The deadline for communication of candidatures for the IPU Presidency shall be 15 days before the opening of the Governing Council session.

10.4 The election shall be conducted by secret ballot using a secure electronic system that has been verified by the Secretary General as ensuring privacy, security and simplicity of use. A secure back-up voting method that respects the secrecy of the ballot will be provided for members who are not able to use the primary voting method.

10.5 The Secretary General shall distribute to members of the Governing Council a ballot with the names of the candidates. The ballot shall only be accessible to members through a personal authentication system following instructions to be provided by the Secretary General. Members shall submit their ballot online or as advised by the Secretary General

10.6 Members shall have 24 hours from the opening of the vote by the President to cast their ballot. The President will remind members of the approaching deadline. The voting period shall not suspend the conduct of the business of the session.

10.7 Once the voting period closes, the results of the votes shall be verified by two tellers appointed by the Governing Council pursuant to Rule 30 of the Rules of the Governing Council, with the assistance of the Secretariat. An independent auditor will provide the tellers with a technical assessment of the voting process and results.

10.8 The President shall announce the result of the secret ballot in a public meeting. He/she will suspend the business of the session for this purpose if necessary. If no candidate receives an absolute majority of the votes cast on the first secret ballot in accordance with Rule 35 of the Rules of the Governing Council, a second secret ballot shall be held between the two candidates having received the highest number of votes in the preceding ballot in accordance with the same procedure as described above. If the two candidates receive the same number of votes, additional ballots shall be held in accordance with the same procedure until a candidate receives an absolute majority.

11. ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

11.1 The deadline for communication of candidatures to the Executive Committee shall be 15 days before the opening of the session.

11.2 If there are more candidates than the available posts on the Executive Committee, a secret ballot shall be held following mutatis mutandis the procedure set out above for the election of the President.

IPU Budget for 2021

Approved by the IPU Governing Council at its 206th session
(Extraordinary virtual session, 2 November 2020)

	2020 Approved Budget	2021 Approved Budget		
		Regular Budget	Other Sources	All Funds
REVENUES				
Assessed contributions	*10,959,200*	10,920,800		**10,920,800**
Working Capital Fund (IPSAS)	*230,000*	230,000		**230,000**
Working Capital Fund (liquid)	*222,000*	392,000		**392,000**
Staff assessment	*1,205,800*	1,085,500		**1,085,500**
Interest	*100,000*	100,000		**100,000**
Programme support costs	*0*	372,900	(372,900)	**0**
Other revenue	*16,000*	16,000		**16,000**
Voluntary contributions	*5,065,000*		5,037,200	**5,037,200**
TOTAL REVENUES	**17,798,000**	**13,117,200**	**4,664,300**	**17,781,500**
EXPENDITURES				
Strategic Objectives				
1. Build strong, democratic parliaments	*2,333,100*	1,419,800	1,148,600	**2,568,400**
2. Advance gender equality and respect for women's rights	*1,344,000*	525,500	890,300	**1,415,800**
3. Protect and promote human rights	*1,602,400*	1,034,900	566,100	**1,601,000**
4. Contribute to peacebuilding, conflict prevention and security	*1,445,100*	199,300	1,030,800	**1,230,100**
5. Promote inter-parliamentary dialogue and cooperation	*3,849,700*	3,733,900		**3,733,900**
6. Promote youth empowerment	*351,600*	85,600	387,900	**473,500**
7. Mobilize parliaments around the global development agenda	*1,315,300*	194,700	991,900	**1,186,600**
8. Bridge the democracy gap in international relations	*955,300*	923,500		**923,500**
Subtotal	**13,196,500**	**8,117,200**	**5,015,600**	**13,132,800**
Enablers				
Effective internal governance and oversight	*1,028,100*	1,030,400	21,600	**1,052,000**
Visibility, advocacy and communications	*1,052,000*	1,056,400		**1,056,400**
Gender mainstreaming and a rights-based approach	*10,000*	10,000		**10,000**
A properly resourced and efficient Secretariat	*2,779,000*	2,795,600		**2,795,600**
Subtotal	**4,869,100**	**4,892,400**	**21,600**	**4,914,000**
Other charges	*107,600*	107,600		**107,600**
Eliminations	*(375,200)*		(372,900)	**(372,900)**
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	**17,798,000**	**13,117,200**	**4,664,300**	**17,781,500**

Approved 2021 capital budget

Item	2021
1. Replacement of computers and servers	75,000
2. Furniture	15,000
3. Website development	50,000
Total capital expenditures	**140,000**

Approved programme and budget for 2021

Scale of contributions for 2021 based on the UN scale of assessment

Approved by the IPU Governing Council at its 206th session (Extraordinary virtual session, 2 November 2020)

Country Name	UN 2019–2021	Approved 2021 scale	
	Per cent	Per cent	CHF
Afghanistan	0.007%	0.110%	12,100
Albania	0.008%	0.110%	12,100
Algeria	0.138%	0.270%	29,600
Andorra	0.005%	0.110%	12,100
Angola	0.010%	0.110%	12,100
Argentina	0.915%	1.110%	121,600
Armenia	0.007%	0.110%	12,100
Australia	2.210%	2.440%	267,400
Austria	0.677%	0.860%	94,200
Azerbaijan	0.049%	0.160%	17,500
Bahrain	0.050%	0.160%	17,500
Bangladesh	0.010%	0.110%	12,100
Belarus	0.049%	0.160%	17,500
Belgium	0.821%	1.010%	110,700
Benin	0.003%	0.100%	11,000
Bhutan	0.001%	0.100%	11,000
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	0.016%	0.120%	13,100
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0.012%	0.120%	13,100
Botswana	0.014%	0.120%	13,100
Brazil	2.948%	3.170%	347,400
Bulgaria	0.046%	0.160%	17,500
Burkina Faso	0.003%	0.100%	11,000
Burundi	0.001%	0.100%	11,000
Cabo Verde	0.001%	0.100%	11,000
Cambodia	0.006%	0.110%	12,100
Cameroon	0.013%	0.120%	13,100
Canada	2.734%	2.960%	324,300
Central African Republic	0.001%	0.100%	11,000
Chad	0.004%	0.100%	11,000
Chile	0.407%	0.570%	62,500
China	12.005%	11.750%	1,280,200
Colombia	0.288%	0.440%	48,200
Comoros	0.001%	0.100%	11,000
Congo	0.006%	0.110%	12,100
Costa Rica	0.062%	0.180%	19,700
Côte d'Ivoire	0.013%	0.120%	13,100
Croatia	0.077%	0.200%	21,900
Cuba	0.080%	0.200%	21,900
Cyprus	0.036%	0.150%	16,400
Czech Republic	0.311%	0.460%	50,400
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	0.006%	0.110%	12,100
Democratic Republic of the Congo	0.010%	0.110%	12,100
Denmark	0.554%	0.730%	80,000
Djibouti	0.001%	0.100%	11,000
Dominican Republic	0.053%	0.170%	18,600
Ecuador	0.080%	0.200%	21,900
Egypt	0.186%	0.320%	35,100
El Salvador	0.012%	0.120%	13,100

Country Name	UN 2019–2021	Approved 2021 scale	
	Per cent	Per cent	CHF
Equatorial Guinea	0.016%	0.120%	13,100
Estonia	0.039%	0.150%	16,400
Eswatini	0.002%	0.100%	11,000
Ethiopia	0.010%	0.110%	12,100
Fiji	0.003%	0.100%	11,000
Finland	0.421%	0.580%	63,600
France	4.427%	4.620%	506,200
Gabon	0.015%	0.120%	13,100
Gambia (the)	0.001%	0.100%	11,000
Georgia	0.008%	0.110%	12,100
Germany	6.090%	6.220%	681,600
Ghana	0.015%	0.120%	13,100
Greece	0.366%	0.520%	57,000
Guatemala	0.036%	0.150%	16,400
Guinea	0.003%	0.100%	11,000
Guinea-Bissau	0.001%	0.100%	11,000
Guyana	0.002%	0.100%	11,000
Haiti	0.003%	0.100%	11,000
Hungary	0.206%	0.350%	38,400
Iceland	0.028%	0.140%	15,300
India	0.834%	1.030%	112,900
Indonesia	0.543%	0.720%	78,900
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	0.398%	0.560%	61,400
Iraq	0.129%	0.260%	28,500
Ireland	0.371%	0.530%	58,100
Israel	0.490%	0.660%	72,300
Italy	3.307%	3.530%	386,800
Japan	8.564%	8.560%	938,000
Jordan	0.021%	0.130%	14,200
Kazakhstan	0.178%	0.310%	34,000
Kenya	0.024%	0.130%	14,200
Kuwait	0.252%	0.400%	43,800
Kyrgyzstan	0.002%	0.100%	11,000
Lao People’s Democratic Republic	0.005%	0.110%	12,100
Latvia	0.047%	0.160%	17,500
Lebanon	0.047%	0.160%	17,500
Lesotho	0.001%	0.100%	11,000
Libya	0.030%	0.140%	15,300
Liechtenstein	0.009%	0.110%	12,100
Lithuania	0.071%	0.190%	20,800
Luxembourg	0.067%	0.180%	19,700
Madagascar	0.004%	0.100%	11,000
Malawi	0.002%	0.100%	11,000
Malaysia	0.341%	0.500%	54,800
Maldives	0.004%	0.100%	11,000
Mali	0.004%	0.100%	11,000
Malta	0.017%	0.120%	13,100
Marshall Islands	0.001%	0.100%	11,000
Mauritius	0.011%	0.110%	12,100
Mexico	1.292%	1.500%	164,400
Micronesia (Federated States of)	0.001%	0.100%	11,000
Monaco	0.011%	0.110%	12,100
Mongolia	0.005%	0.110%	12,100
Montenegro	0.004%	0.100%	11,000
Morocco	0.055%	0.170%	18,600
Mozambique	0.004%	0.100%	11,000
Myanmar	0.010%	0.110%	12,100

Country Name	UN 2019–2021	Approved 2021 scale	
	Per cent	Per cent	CHF
Namibia	0.009%	0.110%	12,100
Nepal	0.007%	0.110%	12,100
Netherlands	1.356%	1.570%	172,000
New Zealand	0.291%	0.440%	48,200
Nicaragua	0.005%	0.110%	12,100
Niger	0.002%	0.100%	11,000
Nigeria	0.250%	0.390%	42,700
North Macedonia	0.007%	0.110%	12,100
Norway	0.754%	0.940%	103,000
Oman	0.115%	0.240%	26,300
Pakistan	0.115%	0.240%	26,300
Palau	0.001%	0.100%	11,000
Palestine		0.100%	11,000
Panama	0.045%	0.160%	17,500
Paraguay	0.016%	0.120%	13,100
Peru	0.152%	0.280%	30,700
Philippines	0.205%	0.340%	37,300
Poland	0.802%	0.990%	108,500
Portugal	0.350%	0.510%	55,900
Qatar	0.282%	0.430%	47,100
Republic of Korea	2.267%	2.500%	273,900
Republic of Moldova	0.003%	0.100%	11,000
Romania	0.198%	0.340%	37,300
Russian Federation	2.405%	2.630%	288,200
Rwanda	0.003%	0.100%	11,000
Saint Lucia	0.001%	0.100%	11,000
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	0.001%	0.100%	11,000
Samoa	0.001%	0.100%	11,000
San Marino	0.002%	0.100%	11,000
Sao Tome and Principe	0.001%	0.100%	11,000
Saudi Arabia	1.172%	1.380%	151,200
Senegal	0.007%	0.110%	12,100
Serbia	0.028%	0.140%	15,300
Seychelles	0.002%	0.100%	11,000
Sierra Leone	0.001%	0.100%	11,000
Singapore	0.485%	0.650%	71,200
Slovakia	0.153%	0.280%	30,700
Slovenia	0.076%	0.190%	20,800
Somalia	0.001%	0.100%	11,000
South Africa	0.272%	0.420%	46,000
South Sudan	0.006%	0.110%	12,100
Spain	2.146%	2.370%	259,700
Sri Lanka	0.044%	0.160%	17,500
Sudan	0.010%	0.110%	12,100
Suriname	0.005%	0.110%	12,100
Sweden	0.906%	1.100%	120,500
Switzerland	1.151%	1.360%	149,000
Syrian Arab Republic	0.011%	0.110%	12,100
Tajikistan	0.004%	0.100%	11,000
Thailand	0.307%	0.460%	50,400
Timor-Leste	0.002%	0.100%	11,000
Togo	0.002%	0.100%	11,000
Tonga	0.001%	0.100%	11,000
Trinidad and Tobago	0.040%	0.150%	16,400
Tunisia	0.025%	0.130%	14,200
Turkey	1.371%	1.590%	174,200
Turkmenistan	0.033%	0.140%	15,300

Country Name	UN 2019–2021	Approved 2021 scale	
	Per cent	Per cent	CHF
Tuvalu	0.001%	0.100%	11,000
Uganda	0.008%	0.110%	12,100
Ukraine	0.057%	0.170%	18,600
United Arab Emirates	0.616%	0.800%	87,700
United Kingdom	4.567%	4.760%	521,600
United Republic of Tanzania	0.010%	0.110%	12,100
Uruguay	0.087%	0.210%	23,000
Uzbekistan	0.032%	0.140%	15,300
Vanuatu	0.001%	0.100%	11,000
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	0.728%	0.910%	99,700
Viet Nam	0.077%	0.200%	21,900
Yemen	0.010%	0.110%	12,100
Zambia	0.009%	0.110%	12,100
Zimbabwe	0.005%	0.110%	12,100

Member or associate member	UN 2019-2021	Approved 2021 scale	
	Per cent	Per cent	CHF
Andean Parliament		0.020%	2,200
Arab Parliament		0.010%	1,100
Central American Parliament		0.010%	1,100
East African Legislative Assembly		0.010%	1,100
European Parliament		0.060%	6,600
Interparliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States		0.020%	2,200
Inter-Parliamentary Committee of the West African Economic and Monetary Union		0.010%	1,100
Latin American and Caribbean Parliament		0.030%	3,300
Parliament of the CEMAC		0.010%	1,100
Parliament of the ECOWAS		0.010%	1,100
Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation		0.030%	3,300
Parliamentary Assembly of La Francophonie		0.020%	2,200
Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe		0.040%	4,400
Total		**100%**	**10,920,800**

Composition of the Preparatory Committee of the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament

Approved by the IPU Governing Council at its 206th session (Extraordinary virtual session, 2 November 2020)

President of the Preparatory Committee

Mr. Duarte Pacheco	President of the IPU

Members

Mr. Slimane Chenine	President	National People's Assembly, Algeria
Mr. Wolfgang Sobotka	President	Nationalrat, Austria
Ms. Fawzia Zainal	Speaker	Council of Representatives, Bahrain
Ms. Stephanie D'Hose	President	Senate, Belgium
Mr. Haroun Kabadi	President	National Assembly, Chad
Mr. Li Zhanshu	Chairman	Standing Committee of NPC, China
Mr. César Litardo	President	National Assembly, Ecuador
Mr. Wolfgang Schäuble	President	German Bundestag, Germany
Mr. Manzoor Nadir	Speaker	National Assembly, Guyana
Mr. Steingrímur J. Sigfússon	Speaker	Althingi, Iceland
Ms. Puan Maharani	Speaker	House of Representatives, Indonesia
Mr. Marzouq Al Ghanim	Speaker	National Assembly, Kuwait
Ms. Catherine Gotani Hara	Speaker	National Assembly, Malawi
Mr. Tinni Ousseini	Speaker	National Assembly, Niger
Ms. Tone Wilhelmsen Trøen	President	Storting, Norway
Mr. Blas Llano	President	Senate, Paraguay
Ms. Zinaida Greceanîi	President	Parliament, Republic of Moldova
Lord Fakafanua	Speaker	Legislative Assembly, Tonga
Ms. Rebecca Kadaga	Speaker	Parliament, Uganda
Ms. Beatriz Argimón	President	General Assembly and Senate, Uruguay

Representatives of the Executive Committee

Mr. Juan Pablo Letelier	Chile
Ms. Pikulkeaw Krairiksh	Thailand
Mr. Jacob Francis Mudenda	Zimbabwe

***Ex-officio* Members of the Preparatory Committee**

Ms. Susan Kihika	President	Bureau of Women Parliamentarians
Mr. Melvin Bouva	President	Board of the Forum of Young MPs

Representative of the UN Secretary General

Ms. Tatiana Valovaya	Director-General, United Nations Office at Geneva

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Mr. Martin Chungong	Secretary General of the IPU

IPU Secretariat Activities Report - Pandemic Period 2020

Noted by the IPU Governing Council at its 206th session
(Extraordinary virtual session, 3 November 2020)

This report summarizes the activities of the IPU during the pandemic months and provides material for reflection on the IPU's role during and after the COVID-19 crisis. The first version of this report was presented during the 283rd session of the Executive Committee in July 2020. The report has since been updated.

From March to October 2020, the IPU adapted to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and found new ways of delivering on its mandate to empower parliaments and parliamentarians.

Within a few days of the pandemic being declared, the IPU responded with its campaign *Parliaments in a time of pandemic* to support parliaments as they put in place measures to continue to function. Through the campaign, the IPU collated data, expertise and good practice for parliaments to use and share. The campaign was also an opportunity to underline how parliaments are essential in the response to the pandemic and should not be sidelined by emergency government actions.

At the same time, the IPU adapted the way it works including by fast-tracking the IT systems and software to enable Secretariat staff to work remotely. As a result, the IPU was still able to deliver business continuity in most of its activities, research and support services for Members, as well as innovate, adapt and find different ways of engaging with the parliamentary community.

This Activities Report outlines the headline Secretariat activities during the past eight months. The report also includes an Annex I which lists all the IPU virtual events organized during this period as well as planned meetings, and an Annex II which lists publications and tools produced by the Secretariat during the pandemic period.

1. Parliaments in a time of pandemic

As COVID-19 became a global pandemic, it rapidly became clear that a new type of support to parliaments was needed. This was an opportunity for the IPU to showcase its global credentials, confirm its position as the leading source of information and guidance on parliamentary practice, and facilitate exchanges between its Members.

As a result, within a few days of the lockdown, the IPU launched its communications and information campaign *Parliaments in a time of pandemic* with dedicated branding and a call to action to all its Members to share their responses to the crisis.

Resources developed by the Secretariat for the campaign included:

- A **country-by-country compilation** of how parliaments are dealing with the crisis in terms of health measures, legislation, government scrutiny, technology and innovation
- A practical **Q and A on remote working tools and technology** for parliaments
- A **guidance note** on how parliaments can ensure that government interventions in the COVID-19 crisis take into account a **gender** dimension
- A **guidance note** on how parliaments can ensure that government interventions in the COVID-19 crisis are consonant with **human rights**
- A **two-minute video** on how parliaments and parliamentarians have responded to the pandemic

The campaign has received global attention in the media and on social media with many requests for interviews from the international press. More than 100 parliaments answered the IPU's call to action and the website saw a 40 to 50 per cent growth in traffic during the pandemic period, compared to the same period last year, with the country compilation page receiving thousands of views.

As well as collating much of the good practice, the IPU Centre for Innovation in Parliament facilitated numerous exchanges between Members on remote working methods and technological solutions.

The IPU also partnered with WHO and UNDRR for a series of webinars between experts and parliamentarians which mobilized hundreds of participants.

The IPU is also finalizing a policy note for parliamentarians entitled "Green approaches to COVID-19 recovery", in partnership with the UN Environment Programme. The IPU Secretary General presented insights from this note at the "Achieving a green and inclusive recovery post COVID-19" session of the 2020 virtual Global Parliamentary Forum at the World Bank and IMF Annual Meetings on 14 October 2020.

The IPU has partnered with the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia Pacific in the organization of a series of regional webinars for parliaments on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in time of a pandemic.

The IPU is currently looking into developing further research to help parliaments manage the post-COVID period and into how the pandemic has affected the functioning of parliaments. This includes a series of consultations of IPU Members on the impact of the pandemic on parliamentary work and capacity.

2. Business continuity

Despite the cancellation of the IPU Assemblies in April and October, the Secretariat has continued to support its Members, moved many meetings and seminars online, prepared relevant documents and continued to conduct its research programmes for parliaments and parliamentarians.

2.1 Supporting the Speakers' Conference and IPU statutory bodies

In the lead-up to the first part of the **Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament**, the Secretariat organized four virtual sessions of the Preparatory Committee (on 21 April, 13 May, 2 June, 6 and 7 August) to prepare for the Speakers' Conference and the 13th Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament.

A drafting committee was set up which held two virtual meetings to prepare the draft outcome Declaration of the Speakers' Conference, which was circulated to all national parliaments for their feedback and possible amendments.

The Secretariat also organized five virtual **Executive Committee** meetings (on 3, 18, 26 June, 9 July, and 31 August), to examine pressing matters relating to the IPU budget, programme of work and future meetings.

The Executive Committee decided to establish a working group to make recommendations on the agenda and modalities for a virtual meeting of the IPU Governing Council from 1 to 4 November. The working group met three times (on 3 and 16 July, and 13 August).

The first part of the **Fifth Edition of the World Conference of Speakers of Parliament** took place virtually on 19 and 20 August. For the first time, the conference was organized with a national parliament – the Austrian National Council represented by Speaker Wolfgang Sobotka.

Over 115 of the world's most senior legislators took part in the conference. They were joined by hundreds of other members of parliament, diplomats, scientists and representatives of multilateral organizations to discuss international parliamentary cooperation to address the challenges facing a COVID-19 world.

The conference culminated in a declaration on the overall theme of parliamentary leadership for more effective multilateralism that delivers peace and sustainable development for the people and planet.

The **13th Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament** took place virtually on 17 and 18 August. It brought together 28 women Speakers of parliament from 26 countries who exchanged their experience of women's parliamentary leadership in a time of COVID-19. They also discussed how to step up equality between men and women, building on the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

The **High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism** held a virtual meeting on 4 June, with an agenda which included funding for its programme of work, review of the IPU-UNODC-UNOCT trilateral agreement and an update on the development of new products, such as a mobile application for MPs and an interactive map.

In July, the IPU, UNODC, and UNOCT organized a webinar on model provisions regarding victims of terrorism to strengthen the capacity of national parliaments to counter terrorism and prevent violent extremism. Since the IPU High-level Advisory Group meeting in June, the design and development of the mobile application and interactive map, as well as the creation of a global parliamentary network are moving forward.

The **Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians** met virtually on 25 May and examined the cases of 210 MPs out of its current caseload of 488 MPs from 40 countries who have reported human rights violations.

The human rights team conducted extensive follow-up with relevant national authorities, complainants and/or third parties in ongoing and new cases before the Committee in Belarus, Brazil, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Egypt, Guatemala, Iraq, Libya, Maldives, Mongolia, Tanzania, Thailand, Turkey, Uganda, Venezuela and Zimbabwe.

The Committee is meeting again virtually from 22 to 30 October.

The IPU **Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law** met virtually on 2 October 2020. It discussed the impact of COVID-19 on refugees, stateless men and women and on the provision of humanitarian assistance more generally.

The Committee agreed on a series of initiatives to raise awareness on measures concerning vulnerable populations such as refugees and stateless men and women. It also discussed strategies to pursue its work in cooperation with the ICRC, and the Global Compact on Refugees, and the statelessness campaign, in cooperation with UNHCR.

The **Committee on Middle East Questions** met virtually on 22 July 2020. The Committee focused on the situations in Palestine and Libya and reviewed communications that had been received by the IPU since October 2019 regarding the Middle East. A representative from Israel attended the Committee meeting for the first time since October 2018.

2.2 Capacity-building for Member Parliaments

In **Botswana**, the IPU gave expert presentations on oversight and e-governance during a webinar induction for new MPs in June 2020. An SDG–gender self-assessment is planned for later in the year.

In **Djibouti**, the IPU provided assistance to the Parliament in crafting legislation on health emergency preparedness which will be considered by Parliament soon. The IPU also supported the National Assembly's elaboration of a practical guide for MPs on procedures and practice related to committee meetings and facilitated an external evaluation of its EU-funded PRAN project. Starting in 2019, this two-year project is designed to strengthen parliament's role in promoting and protecting human rights. So far, it has led to the creation of a parliamentary human rights committee, a women's caucus, as well as greater human rights awareness among MPs. A second two-year cycle is currently being developed to start in 2021.

In **Germany**, the IPU presented its guidelines to prevent sexism and harassment in parliament to a working group of MPs from the Bundestag.

In **Mauritania**, the IPU facilitated two on-line meetings to support women parliamentarians to identify needs and priority actions.

In **Myanmar**, the IPU launched a survey on professional development for MPs as well as training on how to use videoconferencing apps. The IPU conducted two webinars on a COVID-19 Economic Relief Plan attended by over 40 MPs, including MPs from other parliaments. In August, the IPU launched 330 constituency profiles for MPs to help them prepare for the next legislature as well as to support the opening of a parliamentary public document repository.

In Sierra Leone, the IPU provided support to the Parliamentary Caucus on Female Genital Mutilation. The Caucus was established as a result of an IPU workshop held in February 2020.

In **Tanzania**, the IPU continued to provide support to women MPs through an ongoing mentorship programme and the development of capacity-building tools.

In **Tunisia**, IPU expert advice helped improve the Parliament's rules of procedure for enhanced oversight.

In **Ukraine**, the IPU gave a webinar presentation to MPs entitled "Guidelines for parliamentary research services" on the occasion of the launch of a Ukrainian version. The IPU was also part of a high-level discussion "Strengthening the role of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine in achieving the SDGs" on 22 September.

In **Uzbekistan**, the IPU co-organized, with the Parliament and OHCHR, a webinar for parliamentarians on human rights on 10 June. A second webinar took place on 6 October more specifically on the role of parliament in preventing torture.

In **Vanuatu**, the IPU helped secure a grant of CHF 50,000 for a project to support enhanced data use in parliament, in collaboration with the National Statistics Office of Vanuatu.

In **Zambia**, the IPU organized a discovery exercise with the National Assembly's Research Department to help facilitate future development plans.

In **sub-Saharan Africa**, the IPU organized three webinars in June and July for parliamentary staff on women's, children's and adolescents' health. This was organized together with PMNCH, WHO, Living Goods Uganda and Countdown 2030.

The IPU moved its annual information seminar on the IPU to a virtual format. The seminar, in French, was attended by some 25 staff members representing 16 parliaments.

2.3 Research projects and partnerships

Preparations for two of the IPU's flagship publications – the Global Parliamentary Report and the World e-Parliament report – have continued in recent months. Both publications will incorporate new questions on the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the case studies in the Global Parliamentary Report on public participation will focus on COVID-19 and parliamentary- public engagement in time of crisis.

Research and interviews with MPs for a future regional study on sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliaments in Africa have continued.

Online consultations with MPs and experts from 23 countries were carried out in view of a forthcoming IPU-UN Women handbook for parliamentarians on making legislation gender-responsive.

The IPU continues its research, in collaboration with the Graduate Institute of Geneva, on the relations between majority and opposition parties in parliament and on how effective political dialogue can be good for democracy and long-term stability. The research is due for completion in December 2020.

A comparative research paper on parliamentary administration was published in October 2020. The paper shines the spotlight on dimensions of parliamentary autonomy and independence in the governance of parliamentary administration across the globe, from recruitment to budgetary powers.

Over the past few months, the IPU has conducted extensive research on youth participation in parliaments in preparation for a forthcoming report and has updated the IPU's open data platform, Parline. The research also investigates the impact of COVID-19 on youth and how to adapt post-COVID-19 policies to support youth employment, education and health. Lastly, preparations are on-going for the launch of a global campaign to enhance youth representation in parliament, in the context of the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the IPU youth movement.

The IPU has also started working on a paper that will focus on SDGs financing in a time of pandemic.

One significant project which marked the second quarter, was a series of three climate legislation webinars aimed at building the capacity of parliamentarians and parliamentary staff, co-organized with UNFCCC and CISDL.

The IPU strengthened its partnerships with Generation Equality Forum and International Gender Champions to promote progress towards gender equality.

The IPU also took part in an expert group meeting on women's political participation convened by UN Women, in preparation for the session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women to be held in 2021.

In September and October, four video statements by the IPU President were presented during the UN 75th anniversary High-Level meetings on 21 September and 26 October, as well as on the specific themes of biodiversity (30 September), Beijing +25 (1 October), and nuclear disarmament (2 October).

In October, the IPU also convened the first in a series of online MP briefings on UN processes with close to 100 parliamentarians joining.

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Virtual events and webinars during the pandemic period

Past events

- "Lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic: Parliamentary action to reduce risks, strengthen emergency preparedness and increase resilience" (global webinar on 28 April, organized with UNDRR and WHO, attended by over 500 MPs)
- "One planet, one humanity": Webinar on International Day of Multilateralism (24 April)
- Four webinars for Myanmar on the Economic Relief Plan, Challenges and Public Leadership during COVID-19, attended by over 80 MPs, and an experience exchange with international MPs (May, June, August, and September)
- Two video parliamentary consultations "Assuring our Common Future: a draft guide to parliamentary action in support of disarmament for security and sustainable development"
- Virtual meeting with members of the human rights committee of the National Assembly of Senegal to explore how the IPU and OHCHR can support their work (28 May)
- Virtual conference (with OHCHR and the Uzbek Parliament) on human rights in Uzbekistan (10 June)
- Launch of parliament e-learning platform; first training course on Committee skills for parliamentary staff in Myanmar (June 2020)
- Virtual briefing with Burkinabe stakeholders on progress in the implementation of recommendations of the UN Human Rights Council for Burkina Faso
- Virtual meetings of two Centre for Innovation in Parliament hubs: parliaments in Southern Africa (hosted by the National Assembly of Zambia) and in Latin America (hosted by the Chamber of Deputies of Chile, in partnership with NDI). Discussion within both hubs continues via a dedicated WhatsApp group.
- Virtual meeting of the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians (25 May)
- "Understanding women's, children's and adolescents' health (regional webinar for parliamentary staff in sub-Saharan Africa on 17 June, organized with PMNCH, WHO, Living Goods Uganda and Countdown 2030)
- "Creating an enabling legislative environment for women's, children's and adolescents' health" (regional webinar for parliamentary staff in sub-Saharan Africa on 24 June, organized with PMNCH, WHO, Living Goods Uganda and Countdown 2030)
- Quintet meeting, discussion with the Heads of the Geopolitical Groups and virtual launch of the IPU 130th Anniversary Book on International Day of Parliamentarism (30 June)
- "Making the budget work for women, children and adolescents" – regional webinar for parliamentary staff in sub-Saharan Africa organized with PMNCH, WHO, Living Goods Uganda and Countdown 2030 (2 July)
- Webinar: Building back better: Lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic to enhance the role of parliaments in disaster risk reduction (9 July)
- Virtual workshop (with OHCHR and the Commonwealth Secretariat) for parliamentarians from countries in the Caribbean and Canada (all members of the Commonwealth) entitled "Engaging parliaments on the promotion of human rights including on the work of the Human Rights Council and its Universal Periodic Review (UPR)" (13 and 14 July)

- Parliamentary Forum on the occasion of the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (15 July)
- Virtual consultation co-organized with the International Development Law Organization on freedom of expression (17 July)
- Webinar for the Asia-Pacific region parliaments: “The impact of COVID-19 on SDG implementation in Asia-Pacific: What role for parliaments?”, organized with UN ESCAP (28 July)
- IPU Secretary General speaks at Parliamentary partnership of education, culture for sustainable development – AIPA (30 July)
- Online training with the women parliamentary caucus in Mauritania (6 July and 10 August)
- 13th Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament (17-18 August)
- Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament (19-20 August)
- Celebrating International Youth Day with interventions by the IPU Secretary General and the President of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians during the Samarkand Youth Forum (12 August)
- “Compliance and implementation under the Paris Agreement” (1/3 global webinars organized with UNFCCC, 27 August)
- IPU contribution to the informal consultation on the United Nations Treaty Body review (28 August)
- IPU Secretary General speaks at UNITE Global Summit (7 September)
- IPU Secretary General speaks at the 41st General Assembly of the AIPA (8 September)
- Satyarthi Children's Foundation: Third Laureates and Leaders for Children Summit with participation of the IPU Secretary General (9-10 September)
- COVID-19 and democracy: Can parliaments come to the rescue? Virtual interactive panel debate organized for International Day of Democracy, in partnership with the Julie Ann Wrigley Global Futures Laboratory at Arizona State University (15 September)
- IPU Secretary General speaks at Inaugural meeting of the High Level Commission on ICPD25 Follow-up (17 September)
- “Law and governance approaches within the ocean-climate nexus” (2/3 global webinars organized with UNFCCC, 17 September)
- Parliaments and the UN: The way forward. An IPU event in the lead-up to the UN75 Summit. (17 September)
- Inaugural meeting of the High-Level Commission on ICPD25 Follow-up (17 September)
- Online UNGA side event: The Future of Multilateral Drug Policy (24 September)
- Parliamentary Responses to Solutions for Forced Displacement in the IGAD Region (30 September)
- The 46th session of the Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO (30 September)
- WE Empower Pitch Night with participation of the IPU Secretary General (30 September)
- The IPU Secretary General speaks at WHO side event: Sustainable preparedness for health security and resilience (1 October)
- Online intergenerational dialogue “Centering girls’ voices in the international arena”, organized on the occasion of the International Day of the Girl with the International Gender Champions, OHCHR, UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women, WHO, Plan International, the Permanent Missions of Mexico and the Netherlands in Geneva, among others (8 October)
- “Legislative approaches in ensuring social stability in communities facing climate-induced risks” (3/3 global webinars organized with UNFCCC, 8 October)
- Governance Reform and Partner Engagement Consultations – NGO and IGO (PMNCH) (9 October)
- The IPU Secretary General speaks at virtual session on achieving a green and inclusive recovery post COVID-19 – 2020 Virtual Global Parliamentary Forum at the World Bank & IMF Annual Meetings (14 October)
- Briefing for MPs on UN processes: SDG 1 and the UN definition of poverty (20 October)
- Virtual meeting of the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians (22-30 October)
- IPU Secretary General speaks at Boston University Symposium “Democracy Beyond the Nation State” (28 October)

Future events

- Webinar “The impact of COVID-19 on SDG implementation in Africa: What role for parliaments?”, for African Parliaments, organized with UNECA (13 November)
- Webinar “Universal health coverage in times of COVID-19 – Parliamentary best practices and challenges” (17 November)
- Online event on young women's political participation and leadership (18 November)
- Geneva Peace Week in November 2020 (“Towards evidence-informed disarmament and Parliaments’ Role in Linking Good Security Sector Governance to SDG16 amid COVID-19”)
- First meeting of the Parliamentary Caucus on FGM in Sierra Leone, organized with IPU’s support (First part of November)
- Reviewing UN Peacebuilding: A briefing for Parliamentarians, the second in a series of briefings organized by the Office of the Permanent Observer (18 November)
- In Indonesia the IPU will support the House of Representatives in organizing an SDG information webinar (19 November)
- Online panel discussion on violence against women in politics (co-organized with the Kofi Annan Foundation – 25 November)
- Online presentation of the IPU guidelines on the elimination of sexism and harassment in parliament to the Parlement de la communauté française de Belgique (25 November)
- Arab Regional Parliamentary Forum on the 2030 Agenda: The impact of COVID-19 on SDG implementation in Western Asia and the role of parliaments, organized with UN ESCWA (26 November)
- Inter-parliamentary virtual conversation on Parliaments and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda (TBD – October-November)
- Project supporting enhanced data use in the Vanuatu Parliament in collaboration with the National Statistics Office of Vanuatu (October – November 2020)
- In Albania, the IPU will provide support in organizing an information webinar on the role of parliaments in SDG implementation, and a self-assessment exercise using the IPU/UNDP toolkit “Parliaments and the Sustainable Development Goals” (TBD – between November and December)
- Webinar entitled “The global post-COVID-19 economy: Devising sustainable trade policies to support the fights against poverty” (November 2020)
- Webinar entitled “The impact of COVID-19 on SDG implementation in Latin America: What role for parliaments?” for parliaments of Latin America, organized with UN ECLAC (TBD – between November and December)
- Webinar to strengthen the role of the Committee on human rights of the National Assembly of Senegal in the UPR process (November)
- Online event to re-launch the Not Too Young To Run campaign, in collaboration with partners (late 2020 or early 2021)
- Online conference on young women’s political participation in partnership with the UN Secretary General’s Envoy on Youth
- Sectoral budget analysis virtual training for staff of the National Assembly of Zambia (November - December)
- Online event to launch the 2020 report on youth participation in national parliaments and to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the IPU resolution *Youth participation in the democratic process*
- Virtual Expert Roundtable on the *‘why, what and who’* of monitoring and evaluation of parliamentary performance (December 2020)
- Online event to launch the handbook for parliamentarians on nutrition and food systems (late 2020 or early 2021)
- Webinar “Climate change adaptation in mountain areas: What role is there for parliaments?”, organized with the Adaptation at Altitude programme of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (11 December 2020).
- Webinar “SDGs financing in a time of pandemic” (TBD)

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New publications, tools and content

- Redesign of Parline, the IPU's open data platform, with new data on Speakers, gender and youth
- Publication of an op-ed on gender and COVID-19 co-signed by the IPU Secretary General and the IGC Secretariat
- Publication of "Gender and COVID-19: A guidance note for parliaments"
- Publication of "Human Rights and COVID-19: A guidance note for parliaments"
- Translation of the IPU-UN Women map "Women in Politics" into Arabic and Turkish
- Translation of *Guidelines for the elimination of sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliament* into Turkish, Korean, Japanese and Spanish
- Translation of the IPU's *Evaluating the gender sensitivity of parliaments: A self-assessment toolkit* into Armenian and Ukrainian (in partnership with UNDP)
- Publication of *Road map for action on women's, children's and adolescents' health*, a handbook for parliamentarians
- Op-ed by the IPU Secretary General with the PMNCH Executive Director on World Health Day
- Op-ed by the IPU Secretary General on why power should be restored to parliaments
- Op-ed by the IPU Secretary General with UNDP Administrator, Achim Steiner
- Paper on parliamentary engagement on women's, children's and adolescents' health
- Publication of the IPU 130th Anniversary Book
- Publication of the IPU monthly e-bulletins and quarterly innovation trackers
- Publication of numerous news stories, videos, press releases and opinion pieces including on the pandemic, multilateralism, abused or tortured MPs, 130th anniversary celebrations, International Day of Parliamentarism, International Day of Youth, SDGs, Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, gender equality, and International Day of Democracy
- Partnership with Arizona State University to create a series of four videos for parliamentarians on SDG 5 – Gender Equality
- Publication of Comparative research paper on parliamentary administration
- Publication of the IPU-UNDP Guidelines for enhancing the engagement and contribution of parliaments to effective development cooperation
- Translation of the IPU-UNDP toolkit "Parliaments and the Sustainable Development Goals: A self-assessment toolkit" into Ukrainian and Indonesian

Calendar of future meetings and other activities

Approved by the IPU Governing Council at its 206th session
(Extraordinary virtual session, 3 November 2020)

In the context of the ongoing global pandemic, the dates and venues of many of the meetings remain to be confirmed. It may be that the venues are replaced by virtual meetings.

On-line workshop for members of parliamentary human rights committees from French Speaking countries that have recently or will soon be reviewed by the UN Human Rights Council	Virtual 9-10 December 2020
Regional workshop on the implementation of the Global Compact on Migration	Republic of Moldova 2020 (Dates to be confirmed)
Third regional seminar on achieving the SDGs for the parliaments of Latin America and the Caribbean	PANAMA CITY (Panama) 2020 or 2021 (Dates to be confirmed)
Third regional seminar on achieving the SDGs for the Twelve Plus Group	PARIS (France) 2020 or 2021 (Dates to be confirmed)
Interregional seminar on achieving the SDGs	BEIJING (China) 2020 or 2021 (Dates to be confirmed)
World e-Parliament Conference	2020 (Venue and dates to be confirmed)
Second Executive Education Parliamentary Leadership seminar for French-speaking participants	2020 (Venue and dates to be confirmed)
Annual Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations	NEW YORK February 2021
Parliamentary meeting on the occasion of the 65th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)	NEW YORK March 2021
Regional seminar on achieving the SDGs for Asia Pacific parliaments	ISLAMABAD (Pakistan) March 2021 (Dates to be confirmed)
142nd Assembly and related meetings	GENEVA (Switzerland) May/June 2021
Parliamentary Forum at the United Nations High-level Political Forum	NEW YORK or virtual July 2021
13th Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament(in-person)	VIENNA (Austria) July 2021 (Dates to be confirmed)
Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament (in-person)	VIENNA (Austria) July 2021 (Dates to be confirmed)
143rd Assembly and related meetings	KIGALI (Rwanda) 6-10 November 2021
Parliamentary meeting at the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26)	GLASGOW (United Kingdom) November 2021
Event on the occasion of the World Health Assembly	GENEVA (Switzerland) 2021 (Dates to be confirmed)
Second regional seminar on achieving the SDGs for African parliaments	DJIBOUTI (Djibouti) 2021 (Dates to be confirmed)

Parliamentary Conference on the occasion of the Twelfth WTO Ministerial Conference	NUR-SULTAN (Kazakhstan) 2021 (Dates to be confirmed)
Parliamentary meeting at the 2021 World Investment Forum	ABU DHABI (United Arab Emirates) 2021 (Dates to be confirmed)
First Global Parliamentary Meeting on achieving the SDGs	Indonesia 2021 (Dates to be confirmed)
Capacity-building regional workshop on countering terrorism and violent extremism for the G5 Sahel	NIAMEY (Niger) 2021 (Dates to be confirmed)
International or regional workshop for members of parliamentary human rights committees	2021 (Venue and dates to be confirmed)
Regional workshop on promoting the rights of the child for the parliaments of the East and South Asia region	2021 (Venue and dates to be confirmed)
Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians	2021 (Venue and dates to be confirmed)
Fifth South Asia Speakers' Summit on achieving the SDGs	2021 (Venue and dates to be confirmed)
Speakers' Summit (P20) on the occasion of the G20	2021 (Venue and dates to be confirmed)
Capacity-building regional workshop on countering terrorism and violent extremism for the Eurasian Group	2021 (Venue and dates to be confirmed)
Capacity-building regional workshop on countering terrorism and violent extremism for the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC)	2021 (Venue and dates to be confirmed)
Workshop on comprehensive disarmament	2021 (Venue and dates to be confirmed)
World Conference on Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue	MOSCOW (Russian Federation) May 2022
Parliamentary session at the High-level Meeting on Diplomacy for Health Security and Emergency Preparedness	MARRAKESH (Morocco) 2022 (Dates to be confirmed)
First Global Parliamentary Summit on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism	2022 (Venue and dates to be confirmed)
Capacity-building regional workshop on countering terrorism and violent extremism for the African Group	2022 (Venue and dates to be confirmed)
Capacity-building regional workshop on countering terrorism and violent extremism for the Arab Group	2022 (Venue and dates to be confirmed)

Decisions concerning the Human Rights of Parliamentarians

Côte d'Ivoire

Decision adopted unanimously by the IPU Governing Council at its 206th session (Extraordinary virtual session, 3 November 2020)

Alain Lobognon, Twitter

CIV-07 - Alain Lobognon
CIV-08 - Jacques Ehouo
CIV-09 - Guillaume Soro
CIV-10 - Loukimane Camara
CIV-11 - Kando Soumahoro
CIV-12 - Yao Soumaïla
CIV-13 - Soro Kanigui
CIV-14 - Issiaka Fofana
CIV-15 - Bassatigui Fofana
CIV-16 - Mohamed Sess Soukou

Alleged human rights violations

- ✓ Arbitrary arrest and detention
- ✓ Lack of due process at the investigation stage
- ✓ Lack of fair trial proceedings
- ✓ Violation of freedom of opinion and expression
- ✓ Failure to respect parliamentary immunity

A. Summary of the case

This case concerns the situation of several Ivorian members of parliament who have faced violations of their fundamental rights since 2018 in the exercise of their parliamentary mandate.

Case CIV-COLL-01

Côte d'Ivoire: Parliament affiliated to the IPU

Victims: 10 male opposition members of parliament

Qualified complainants: Section I.1(a) of the Committee Procedure (Annex I)

Submission of complaints: January 2019 and February 2020 (CIV-09 to CIV-16)

Recent IPU decision(s): May 2020

Recent IPU mission(s): - - -

Recent Committee hearing(s): Hearing of the delegation of Côte d'Ivoire at the 140th PU Assembly in Doha (April 2019)

Recent follow-up:
- Communication from the authorities: Observations of the Government: Letter from the Speaker of the National Assembly (May and October 2020)
- Communication from the complainants: October 2020
- Communications addressed to the authorities: Letters to the Minister of Justice and the Speaker of the National Assembly (June and September 2020)
- Communication addressed to the complainants: October 2020

Cases of Mr. Alain Lobognon and Mr. Jacques Ehouo (2018–2019)

In October 2018, the investiture as mayor of Mr. Jacques Ehouo, a member of parliament from the Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI), did not take place immediately following his election because of allegations of corruption and misappropriation of funds that surfaced shortly after his victory. After initially refusing to appear at a hearing when summoned by the Economic Police, invoking his status as a member of parliament, Mr. Ehouo eventually attended a hearing on 10 January 2019, following which he was charged by the Prosecutor with misappropriation of public funds, forgery and the use of counterfeit documents, and money laundering.

Mr. Ehouo's case is linked to that of Mr. Alain Lobognon, who had expressed his concern on social media, in January 2019, about the legality of the action taken against Mr. Ehouo by the Prosecutor. Mr. Lobognon had posted a tweet, following which he was accused of posting a message that amounted to spreading fake news and causing public disorder. The Prosecutor consequently ordered his arrest for a *flagrante delicto* offence. On 15 January 2019, Mr. Lobognon was taken into custody.

The Bureau of the National Assembly met on 16 January 2019 and decided to demand that Mr. Lobognon's custody and the proceedings against both members of parliament be suspended. The Prosecutor is understood to have disregarded this decision, as Mr. Lobognon was sentenced on 29 January 2019 in the court of first instance to a one-year prison term in a trial that his lawyers claimed lacked fair trial proceedings and was biased. On 13 February 2019, the court of appeal sentenced Mr. Lobognon to a six-month suspended prison term. Mr. Lobognon was released and lodged an appeal at the court of cassation. As for Mr. Ehouo, he took office as mayor following his investiture on 23 March 2019. However, it is not clear whether Mr. Ehouo is still subject to a judicial investigation.

New complaints received in late 2019

In December 2019, the Committee received a new complaint about nine members of the National Assembly, including Mr. Lobognon, who had allegedly been arbitrarily arrested with Mr. Loukimane Camara, Mr. Kando Soumahoro, Mr. Yao Soumaïla and Mr. Soro Kanigui on 23 December 2019. The five members of parliament have been charged with causing public disorder, challenging the authority of the State and spreading fake news, bringing discredit to state institutions and their operation, all of which amount to an attack on state authority. At the same time, member of parliament and former Speaker of the National Assembly, Mr. Guillaume Soro, was allegedly prevented from returning to Côte d'Ivoire and had an international arrest warrant issued against him for misappropriation of public funds and seeking to challenge the integrity of the State. In its communication of 13 May 2020, the Ivorian Government dismissed the complainants' allegations, insisting on the legality of the procedure followed. The five members of parliament allegedly stated during a press conference held on 23 December 2019 that the Ivorian airport authorities had prevented Mr. Soro's private plane from landing in Côte d'Ivoire and that his plane had therefore been rerouted to Ghana. According to the authorities, this information was fake, as it had reportedly been denied by the National Civil Aviation Authority in a press release in which it stated that authorization to fly over Ivorian territory and to land at Abidjan airport had been granted on 20 December 2019. The authorities did not send a copy of this press release.

In its communication of 13 May 2020, the Ivorian Government maintained that the allegations of failure to respect the parliamentary immunity of the members of parliament were completely unfounded, as they are accused of having actively participated in the first phase of the conspiracy against state security and were prevented from carrying out the second part of their plan involving an insurrection, due to judicial police intervention. These alleged facts constitute for the Ivorian Government a proven *flagrante delicto* offence, thereby justifying the absence of authorization from the Chamber Bureaux to which the members belong. In their letter of 21 October 2020, the parliamentary authorities indicated that the *flagrante delicto* nature of the offence referred to by the Ivorian Government relates, in the present case, not to an isolated action or aim, but rather to a conspiracy, under the terms of article 163 and subsequent articles of the Ivorian Criminal Code. It was in this context that the immunity of the members of parliament was lifted on 20 January 2020 in a decision taken by the Bureau of the National Assembly, even though these members had already been arrested and detained.

Mr. Guillaume Soro's situation

With regard to the case of Mr. Soro, the Ivorian Government confirmed its involvement in two separate cases, one of which relates to a destabilization plan due to be carried out imminently, which emerged from an audio recording in which Mr. Soro reportedly exposed his plan to launch an attack against state

security. According to the authorities, this plan consisted in the recruitment of armed individuals present in the country, with a view to harming the integrity of the national territory. The Ivorian authorities concluded that there was a direct link between this recording, dating back to 2017, and Mr. Soro's political campaign, the aim of which was to discredit the Republic's institutions. According to the authorities, the planned conspiracy became increasingly more plausible after the discovery of weapons of war in a lagoon in Assinie. The second case involving Mr. Soro is said to concern the misappropriation of funds following the alleged purchase in 2007 of a property using treasury funds, the real ownership of the property having been concealed.

On 22 April 2020, the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (AfCHPR), under its implementation of interim measures, ordered the suspension of the arrest warrant issued against Mr. Soro, the provisional release of the members of parliament currently in detention, and adherence to the *status quo* until the adoption of a decision on the merits of this case. Despite the AfCHPR's ruling, the Ivorian justice system continued examining Mr. Soro's case, who was found guilty of misappropriation of funds and sentenced on 28 April 2020 by the Abidjan court of first instance to 20 years' rigorous imprisonment, deprivation of his civil and political rights for a period of five years and a fine of 4.5 billion CFA francs. Given the AfCHPR's ruling and the fact that Mr. Soro's trial had been marked by numerous judicial irregularities, his lawyers decided not to appeal his conviction at first instance. In their letter of 21 October 2020, the parliamentary authorities emphasized that recognition of AfCHPR jurisdiction by the Member States of the African Union was voluntary. According to the authorities, the ruling handed down by the AfCHPR in Mr. Soro's case had overstepped its mandate, which limits its jurisdiction to only identifying human rights violations.

On 15 September 2020, the Constitutional Council invalidated the candidacy of Mr. Guillaume Soro, while the AfCHPR ordered the reinstatement of his candidacy for the presidential elections.

Recent developments

On 24 September 2020, the authorities released members of parliament Mr. Soro Kanigui, Mr. Loukimane Camara and Mr. Soumaïla Yao. The three parliamentarians were granted a provisional release and placed under judicial supervision with serious restrictions, including being prohibited from contacting each other, from engaging in "cyber activism" or from participating in "political meetings". In their communication of 21 October 2020, the parliamentary authorities indicated that Mr. Kando Soumahoro had also been provisionally released after recovering from COVID-19. The authorities also confirmed that Mr. Alain Lobognon would continue to be held in detention for reasons known only to the investigating judge in charge of the case.

The communications of the Ivorian authorities of 13 May and 21 October 2020 contain no documentation establishing the truth of the statements made, in particular no copy of the ruling handed down against Mr. Soro in the money-laundering case, no copy of the audio recording mentioned (only extracts were provided) together with the date on which it was reportedly made, and no copy of the arrest and search warrants.

B. Decision

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

1. *Thanks* the Ivorian parliamentary authorities for the information provided in their letter of 21 October 2020;

2. *Notes* the provisional release under judicial supervision of Mr. Loukimane Camara, Mr. Soro Kanigui, Mr. Soumaïla Yao and Mr. Kando Soumahoro; *considers nevertheless* that the restrictive conditions attached to their release are in no way justified; *considers*, rather, that such conditions reinforce the complainants' allegations that the proceedings against these members of parliament are politically motivated and are part of the continued political and judicial harassment to which they have been subjected since 2019; *underscores* that these members of parliament remained in detention for nine months with no legal prospect of a fair trial being held;

3. *Deplores* the continued detention of Mr. Alain Lobognon in the absence of any material evidence, especially given he is still being held during the COVID-19 pandemic period and that his state of health is fragile; and *calls on* the authorities to release him immediately if they are unable to provide material evidence of his guilt in relation to the charges against him;

4. *Notes* the arguments provided by the parliamentary authorities concerning the evidence against the members of parliament, in particular the discovery of weapons hidden in the homes of those accused; *stresses*, however, that the Ivorian authorities have so far failed to provide any documentation to establish the truth of these allegations, given that it has not been established that Mr. Lobognon and the four other members of parliament hitherto detained had weapons in their homes;

5. *Regrets* that, given the proven violations of his fundamental rights, which were also found by the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights in two separate rulings, Mr. Soro was deprived of his civil and political rights; *once again calls on* the authorities to provide a copy of the ruling of the court of first instance in order to understand on what grounds the sentence was passed against Mr. Soro;

6. *Recalls* that, in its decision of May 2020, further information regarding the audio recording constituting the key evidence for the Prosecutor's charges was requested from the authorities; *recalls,* moreover, that the authenticity of this recording has been challenged by the complainants;

7. *Is concerned* about the arbitrary measures to which the legal advisers of Mr. Soro and of the other members of parliament are reportedly currently subject; *recalls* that the right to defence is a fundamental right recognized for every individual and which can only be realized by their legal advisers enjoying the effective and unimpeded exercise of their functions;

8. *Takes note* of the lack of information on Mr. Jacques Ehouo's case; and *decides* to close this case pursuant to article 25(b) of its Procedure for the examination and treatment of complaints, in the absence of recent information from the complainant on the judicial investigation into the corruption offences to which Mr. Ehouo is reportedly still subject;

9. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the parliamentary authorities, the Minister of Justice and the complainants and to any third party likely to be in a position to supply relevant information;

10. *Requests* the Committee to continue examining this case and to report back to it in due course.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Decision adopted unanimously by the IPU Governing Council at its 206th session (Extraordinary virtual session, 3 November 2020)

© Jean Jacques Mamba

COD-148 – Jean Jacques Mamba

Alleged human rights violations

- ✓ Threats, acts of intimidation
- ✓ Lack of due process at the investigation stage
- ✓ Violation of freedom of opinion and expression

A. Summary of the case

On 13 May 2020, Mr. Jean Jacques Mamba filed a petition, which was signed by 62 members of parliament, seeking the removal from office of the First Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, Mr. Jean-Marc Kabund. This petition came about as a result of Mr. Kabund's refusal to respond to two written requests made by Mr. Jean Jacques Mamba inviting Mr. Kabund to explain the statements he had made regarding the organization of a congress for parliamentarians costing seven million US dollars.

Following the filing of the petition with the National Assembly, member of parliament Mr. Simon Mpiana claimed that his signature had been forged and filed a complaint to the court of cassation. The complainant contends that Mr. Mpiana's accusations were unfounded, in that two members of parliament allegedly attested that Mr. Mpiana had signed the petition in their presence. The former First Deputy Speaker also filed an appeal with the Council of State challenging his removal from office.

On 22 May 2020, Mr. Mamba alerted the police to the attack on his home. The day after the attack, police personnel came to his home and proceeded to arrest him. The complainant alleges that Mr. Mamba's arrest took place under humiliating conditions and in the absence of any documentation authorizing his arrest.
Mr. Mamba was reportedly immediately brought before the judge of the court of cassation without being given an opportunity to attend a hearing. According to the complainant, the purpose of this manoeuvre was to make sure Mr. Mamba was convicted on the same day in a bid to quash his petition and thus render it null and void. This was unsuccessful because, after noting the absence of a hearing and of information on the facts justifying his arrest, the court of cassation judge decided to release Mr. Mamba and to place him under house arrest. Furthermore, the National Assembly considered Mr. Mamba's petition after a validation committee verified the 62 signatures. Thus, on 25 May 2020, the First Deputy Speaker was removed from office. This decision was ratified by the Constitutional Court on 17 June 2020.

Case COD-148

Democratic Republic of the Congo: Parliament affiliated to the IPU

Victim: Opposition member of parliament

Qualified complainant(s): Section I.(1)(a) of the Committee Procedure (Annex I)

Submission of complaint: September 2020

Recent IPU decision(s): - - -

Recent IPU mission(s): - - -

Recent Committee hearing(s): - - -

Recent follow-up:
- Communication from the authorities: - - -
- Communication from the complainant: October 2020
- Communication addressed to the authorities: Letter to the Speaker of the National Assembly (September 2020)
- Communication addressed to the complainant: October 2020

On 27 May 2020, the National Assembly passed a resolution calling for the suspension of Mr. Mamba's detention and the proceedings against him, pursuant to article 107 of the Constitution, which applies to ongoing parliamentary sessions. On the same day, the court of cassation decided to stay the proceedings until the end of the current parliamentary session.

On 15 September 2020, when the parliamentary session resumed, the prosecution issued a fresh warrant for Mr. Mamba's arrest on the premise that the National Assembly's resolution only applied to the preceding session. Mr. Mamba has since left the country to avoid prison. The complainant adds that the member of parliament has lost all confidence in the justice system, as he claims that the decision to convict him has already been taken.

In a meeting with the IPU Secretary General, the Minister for Human Rights of the Democratic Republic of the Congo affirmed the arbitrary nature of Mr. Mamba's detention. He also reaffirmed his support for the member of parliament and his commitment to upholding the rights of members of parliament.

B. Decision

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

1. *Notes* that the complaint concerning Mr. Jean Jacques Mamba is admissible, considering that the complaint: (i) was submitted in due form by complainants qualified under Section I.1(a) of the Procedure for the examination and treatment of complaints (Annex I of the Revised Rules and Practices of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians); (ii) concerns an incumbent member of parliament at the time of the initial allegations; and (iii) concerns allegations of violation of freedom of opinion and expression, lack of due process at the investigation stage, and threats and acts of intimidation, allegations that fall under the Committee's mandate;

2. *Is greatly concerned* by the fact that Mr. Mamba's arrest appears to have violated his parliamentary immunity and that the legal proceedings against him appear to stem from the legitimate exercise of his parliamentary mandate; *stresses* that Mr. Mamba's petition exceeded the 50 signatures required by the Rules of Procedure of the National Assembly and that, of the 62 signatures collected, only the authenticity of one has been questioned; *notes* that the National Assembly has verified and validated this petition and that the Constitutional Court has upheld the removal from office of the former First Deputy Speaker;

3. *Regrets* that Mr Mamba was forced to leave his country and is therefore unable to participate in the work of the current parliamentary session due to the fresh arrest warrant issued against him;

4. *Points* out that this case must be seen in the context of a large number of other cases in the Democratic Republic of the Congo that have been referred to the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians and which have so far not been fully resolved; *stresses* that Mr. Mamba's case should therefore prompt the competent authorities to take these concerns in question all the more seriously; *encourages* the authorities to ensure that progress made so far at the political level is not undermined, by taking the necessary steps to guarantee Mr. Mamba's security and uphold his fundamental rights;

5. *Welcomes* steps taken by the National Assembly in this regard following Mr. Mamba's arrest on 22 May 2020 to guarantee his rights, in particular the passing of a resolution on 27 May 2020 calling for the suspension of proceedings against him; *invites* the parliamentary authorities to take all necessary measures to ensure that Mr. Mamba is able to return to the Democratic Republic of the Congo without fear of further arrest and prosecution on the same charges;

6. *Takes note with satisfaction* the support shown by the Minister for Human Rights with respect to Mr. Mamba's rights to exercise his parliamentary mandate; and *expresses the hope* that he will continue to follow up Mr. Mamba's case and that other executive and judicial authorities will do likewise; *wishes* to be kept informed in this respect;

7. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the parliamentary authorities, the Minister for Human Rights, the Prosecutor General, the complainant and any third party likely to be in a position to supply relevant information;

8. *Requests* the Committee to continue examining this case and to report back to it in due course.

Gabon

Decision adopted unanimously by the IPU Governing Council at its 206th session (Extraordinary virtual session, 3 November 2020)

© Justin Ndoundangoye

GAB-04 – Justin Ndoundangoye

Alleged human rights violations

- ✓ Torture, ill-treatment and other acts of violence
- ✓ Arbitrary arrest and detention
- ✓ Lack of due process at the investigation stage
- ✓ Failure to respect parliamentary immunity
- ✓ Impunity

A. Summary of the case

Mr. Justin Ndoundangoye, a Gabonese member of parliament, has reportedly been held in pretrial detention at the Central Prison of Libreville since 9 January 2020, accused of instigating misappropriation of public funds, bribery, and money laundering and conspiracy offences.

Mr. Ndoundangoye is the former Secretary General of the *Association des jeunes émergents volontaires* (Association of Young Emerging Volunteers – AJEV). According to the complainant, the proceedings against and detention of Mr. Ndoundangoye are said to be part of a political settling of scores connected to his views and links to the AJEV. He was reportedly detained during the so-called "*Opération Scorpion"* (Operation Scorpion), in which around 20 people, all members of the AJEV, were arrested, taken into custody, charged and placed on remand.

Case GAB-04

Gabon: Parliament affiliated to the IPU

Victim: Member of the majority

Qualified complainant(s): Section I.1.(a) of the Committee Procedure (Annex I)

Submission of complaint: May 2020

Recent IPU decision(s): - - -

Recent IPU mission(s): - - -

Recent Committee hearing(s): - - -

Recent follow-up:
- Communication from to the authorities: - - -
- Communication from the complainant: September 2020
- Communications addressed to the authorities: Letters addressed to the Speaker of the National Assembly (October 2020)
- Communication addressed to the complainant: September 2020

Among other irregularities, the complainant states that Mr. Ndoundangoye was reportedly kept in police custody for a period of two weeks in violation of the provisions of article 56 of the Criminal Procedure Code of Gabon, which provides for a maximum period of 48 hours, renewable once. During these two weeks, he was allegedly questioned by officials of the Directorate General for Counter-Interference and Military Security, who were not judicial police officers. He was reportedly unable to speak to his lawyers while in police custody. The lawyers did not have access to the file, either to the procedural documents or to the evidence against him. The only documents available to the defence was the remand order.

Mr. Ndoundangoye was reportedly unable to comment on the facts of the case as he had allegedly been charged at the start of the preliminary examination. Moreover, the indictment issued by the Public Prosecutor is said to be seriously flawed, for example not including the precise date when the offences were committed or any other concrete evidence establishing the alleged offences. The complainant claims that Mr. Ndoundangoye was detained without being questioned by an investigating judge, in violation of the relevant domestic legislation.

On 26 December, Mr. Ndoundangoye was reportedly arrested "*manu militari*" by armed officers before the Bureau of the National Assembly had endorsed the lifting of his parliamentary immunity and therefore before it had come into effect. Likewise, Mr. Ndoundangoye's bank assets were said to have been frozen from the beginning of December 2019 in the absence of any legal action and before his parliamentary immunity had been lifted.

The complainant claims that, on the night of 25 to 26 January 2020, after ordering him to take all his clothes off, three hooded prison officers tied up Mr. Ndoundangoye with his hands behind his back. They allegedly asked him to lie flat on his stomach, legs apart. Held by each leg by an officer, he was reportedly beaten in the testicles, carried out by the third officer using a thick rope knotted at the end. He reportedly received sustained blows to the testicles for some time, and was then turned over, knees pressed against his temples, legs still apart, and subjected to blows by the knotted rope to his penis. He also reportedly at this time received several punches and kicks to his ribs and hips. The officers allegedly photographed him while he was naked. Before leaving him, they are said to have strongly advised him not to say a word to his lawyer, otherwise they would come back for "a killing". In taking these threats further, they allegedly threatened to rape his wife and kill his children if the matter was publicized.

A request for intervention in the form of protection was reportedly sent to the specialized investigating judge, with an official copy sent to the Public Prosecutor. In particular, the judge was reportedly asked to order that Mr. Ndoundangoye be admitted to hospital so he could undergo appropriate examinations following the alleged acts of torture. This request reportedly remains unanswered.

On 7 February 2020, during a press conference, the Public Prosecutor reportedly stated that the acts of torture had not been proven and contested their existence on the basis of a report not communicated in the proceedings, without having heard the victim beforehand.

On 11 February 2020, Mr. Ndoundangoye reportedly attended a hearing with the investigating judge of the second chamber. During the hearing, he reportedly explicitly denounced the acts of torture of which he was allegedly a victim and the threats made against him, but his statements were not recorded and no follow-up action was taken. The member of parliament's lawyers then reportedly sent a letter of denunciation to the investigating judge of the second chamber.

The case has reportedly been referred to the Speaker of the National Assembly, the Minister of Justice, the Public Prosecutor and other bodies. No action has been taken to date.

Mr. Ndoundangoye has reportedly been in solitary confinement since the start of his detention.

B. Decision

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

1. *Notes* that the complaint concerning Mr. Ndoundangoye is admissible, considering that the complaint: (i) was submitted in due form by a qualified complainant under Section I.1.(a) of the Procedure for the examination and treatment of complaints (Annex I of the Revised Rules and Practices of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians); (ii) concerns an incumbent member of parliament at the time of the initial allegations; and (iii) concerns allegations of torture, ill-treatment and other acts of violence, arbitrary arrest and detention, lack of due process at the investigation stage, and failure to respect parliamentary immunity, allegations that fall under the Committee's mandate;

2. *Is deeply concerned* about the member of parliament's continued detention, in view of the worrying allegations concerning his conditions of detention; *urges* the national authorities to take all necessary steps to ensure Mr. Ndoundangoye's full enjoyment of his rights, in particular his right to life, to physical integrity and to access to judicial guarantees, especially in the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has meant that those detained in prison and other confined spaces are at increased risk of catching the disease;

3. *Wishes* to receive official and detailed information on the facts justifying each of the charges brought against Mr. Ndoundangoye, on the procedure followed by parliament to lift his parliamentary immunity, on the steps taken to investigate the alleged acts of torture and threats reported by the complainant, on progress made in the identification and punishment, if any, of those responsible, as well as on all the points mentioned in this decision;

4. *Sincerely believes* in the importance of ongoing and constructive dialogue with the national authorities, first and foremost with the parliament of the country concerned; *encourages*, in this regard, the Parliament of Gabon to enter into a dialogue with the Committee to ensure a satisfactory and rapid settlement of this case; *affirms* that the IPU stands ready to provide assistance aimed at building the capacities of parliament and other public institutions, upon request, in order to identify any underlying issues that may have given rise to the filing of the complaint and to rectify such issues, including with regard to the legislation and procedures implemented in the case; *requests* the competent authorities to provide further information on how the IPU could best provide such assistance;

5. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the President of the Parliament of Gabon, the complainant and any third party likely to be in a position to supply relevant information;

6. *Requests* the Committee to continue examining this case and to report back to it in due course.

Uganda

Decision adopted unanimously by the IPU Governing Council at its 206th session (Extraordinary virtual session, 3 November 2020)

Mr. Robert Kyagulanyi, aka Bobi Wine, arrives at the headquarters of his political party in Kampala, Uganda, on 21 August 2020. SUMY SADURNI/AFP

UGA19 - Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu (aka Bobi Wine)
UGA20 - Francis Zaake
UGA21 - Kassiano Wadri
UGA22 - Gerald Karuhanga
UGA23 - Paul Mwiru

Case UGA-Coll-01

Uganda: Parliament affiliated to the IPU

Victims: Five male parliamentarians, four independent and one opposition parliamentarian

Qualified complainant(s): Section I.1.(a) and (d) of the Committee Procedure (Annex I)

Submission of complaint: August 2018

Recent IPU decision(s): October 2019

Recent IPU mission(s): January 2020

Recent Committee hearing(s): Hearing with the Ugandan delegation to the 139th IPU Assembly (October 2018)

Recent follow-up:
- Communications from the authorities: Letter from the Attorney General (October 2018); letter from the Speaker of Parliament to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (November 2018); letters from the Speaker of Parliament (February and October 2019)
- Communication from the complainant: September 2020
- Communications addressed to the authorities: Letters addressed to the Speaker of Parliament (March, April and September 2020)
- Communication addressed to the complainant: October 2020

Alleged human rights violations

- ✓ Torture, ill-treatment and other acts of violence
- ✓ Arbitrary arrest and detention
- ✓ Lack of due process at the investigation stage and lack of fair trial proceedings
- ✓ Violation of freedom of opinion and expression
- ✓ Impunity

A. Summary of the case

The case is set against the background of the by-election in Arua municipality in Uganda on 15 August 2018. Mr. Kassiano Wadri, a former parliamentarian, stood in that election as an independent and was elected. The four other parliamentarians, who are either independents or from the opposition, campaigned for Mr. Wadri.

The five individuals were violently arrested on 14 August 2018, on the eve of the by-election, together with 29 other people, in the district of Arua, after President Yoweri Museveni's convoy was reportedly pelted with stones. According to credible reports, the parliamentarians were tortured and ill-treated while in detention. All those arrested, including the five parliamentarians, were charged with treason, which in Uganda carries the death penalty. On 6 August 2019, the following additional charges were reportedly brought against them in relation to the same events: intent to annoy, alarm or ridicule the President, incitement to violence, disobedience of lawful orders, failure to prevent obstruction of traffic, confusion or disorder during a public meeting, and failure to give right of way to the President.

The complainants claim that due process guarantees have been violated from the outset, that the parliamentarians are victims of political repression, as there is no evidence to support the charges brought against them, and that no action has been taken to hold to account the security forces that mistreated them upon their arrest.

The complainants further state that Mr. Kyagulanyi is a popular young parliamentarian, strongly supported among others by the four other parliamentarians in this case, and a well-known singer who enjoys wide popularity among young people. Through his songs and, since 2017 through his parliamentary work, he has been a vocal critic of President Museveni and his government. The complainants affirm that the authorities are doing everything possible to prevent Mr. Kyagulanyi from staging concerts and thus conveying his music and political message. These steps have gone as far as banning Mr. Kyagulanyi from wearing his trademark red beret.

From 25 to 29 January 2020, a Committee delegation conducted an on-site mission to Uganda. Despite its specific request, the delegation was not able to obtain concrete information on possible ongoing cases against police officers in connection with the allegations of torture against the five members of parliament. The delegation was told that no information could be disclosed as the matter was *sub judice*. Among other concerns, the delegation regretted that no progress seemed to have been made towards investigating these allegations and urged the relevant authorities to conduct a prompt, impartial and independent investigation, including, where appropriate, the filing of specific torture charges against the perpetrators and the application of the corresponding penalties under domestic law. It also urged parliament to use its oversight powers effectively to this end.

In a recent development, Mr. Francis Zaake was detained by police and the military again on the evening of Sunday 19 April 2020 and released on 29 April 2020. According to information received, Mr. Zaake was severely tortured while in detention, denied access to his lawyer and family, food and independent medical attention. According to the complainants, Mr. Zaake was initially charged with disobedience of lawful orders for distributing food to his community in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. These charges were finally dropped in August 2020. The complainants also claim that no investigation has been carried out into these allegations of torture and that no action has been taken by parliament to support him in his search for justice. On 6 May 2020, Mr. Zaake lodged a motion before the High Court of Uganda in Kampala (Civil Division) against the Attorney General of Uganda and seven senior officials of the police and the military. The motion seeks to establish responsibility for the violation of his rights, including the right to a fair trial and to be protected from torture and ill-treatment, which are protected under Ugandan law. To date, the court has not issued a decision on that petition. According to the complainants, Mr. Zaake continues to receive credible death threats and intimidating messages from police officers because of his political opinions and to force him to step down from the political stage and put an end to his legal action against his alleged torturers.

B. Decision

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

1. *Thanks* the Ugandan authorities, in particular parliament, for their cooperation during the recent mission by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians to Uganda and for facilitating its conduct;

2. *Thanks* the Speaker of Parliament for her cooperation with the Committee during the mission; *regrets* nevertheless that she and the Ugandan Parliament chose not to meet virtually with the Committee at its most recent session, all the more so given that the issues of concern in this case directly affect parliament; *recalls* in this regard that the Committee's procedure is based on ongoing and constructive dialogue with the authorities, first and foremost the parliament of the country concerned;

3. *Fully endorses* the findings and recommendations contained in the mission report (CL/206/9/R.1);

4. *Reiterates its concern* that, more than two years after the events, no one has been held to account for the torture and ill-treatment of the five parliamentarians, and allegedly several others, in Arua in August 2018 by the security forces; *is gravely concerned* to learn that similar situations with similar outcomes apparently continue to occur in Uganda whereby parliamentarians are detained and tortured by state officials with impunity, as happened to Mr. Zaake in April 2020, which situation the Speaker of Parliament has publicly denounced; *reiterates* that impunity, by shielding those responsible from judicial action and accountability, decisively encourages the

perpetration of further serious human rights violations and that attacks against the life and personal integrity of members of parliament, when left unpunished, not only violate the fundamental rights of individual parliamentarians and of those who elected them, but also affect the integrity of parliament and its ability to fulfil its role as an institution; *urges*, therefore, parliament to use its oversight powers effectively to ensure that the very serious and detailed allegations of torture against the five members of parliament are fully and immediately investigated, followed by whatever accountability steps are warranted as a result; and *requests* the parliamentary authorities to provide information on any relevant developments in this regard and on action taken by parliament to this end; *urges* the relevant authorities to ensure that the civil proceedings that Mr. Zaake has initiated against several named state individuals proceed quickly, bearing in mind that the level of detail of his petition should facilitate a speedy conclusion;

5. *Expresses concern* about detailed information received on serious and continuous threats, including credible death threats, targeting Mr. Zaake and the allegation that his complaints about these have not been examined; *urges*, therefore, the Ugandan authorities to make every effort, as is their duty, to identify the culprits, to bring them to justice, and to put in place the security arrangements that Mr. Zaake's situation requires; *considers* that parliament has a vested interest in using its powers to the fullest to help ensure that effective investigations on these threats are being carried out and protection offered to Mr. Zaake; *wishes*, therefore, to receive official information from the parliamentary authorities on any action taken to this effect;

6. *Remains deeply concerned* about the alleged serious violations of the right to a fair trial in proceedings initiated against the parliamentarians, as well as the other persons arrested in Arua in 2018, and about the nature and severity of the charge of treason, which carries the death penalty, especially in view of the allegations that it is unsupported by evidence and the facts at hand; *regrets* that, one year after the facts, the accused were subject to a set of additional charges in relation to the same events, including the charge of intent to annoy, alarm or ridicule the President with significant repercussions for free speech for the parliamentarians concerned; *considers* that, while fully adhering to the democratic principles of separation of powers and the independence of the judiciary, the *sub judice* rule cannot be invoked as an obstacle to justice or accountability and that parliament is responsible for helping to ensure that all state institutions, including the judiciary, fully abide by the rule of law; *urges*, therefore, parliament to take all necessary measures to ensure strict respect for due process guarantees in ongoing proceedings against parliamentarians; *requests* the parliamentary authorities to keep the IPU informed of any relevant developments in this regard and on any action taken by parliament to this end;

7. *Is deeply concerned* about the steps taken to allegedly prevent Mr. Kyagulanyi from conveying his political message, which run counter to his rights to freedom of expression and freedom of assembly*; urges* the authorities, therefore, to lift the restrictions imposed on him and to do everything possible to allow him full enjoyment of his right to freedom of expression as a parliamentarian or a singer and to meet and interact with his supporters;

8. *Reiterates its wish* to mandate a trial observer to monitor the upcoming court proceedings against the members of parliament; and *requests* the authorities to inform the IPU of the dates of the trials when available and of any other relevant judicial developments in the case;

9. *Urges* all sides to refrain from violence and also the relevant authorities to take all necessary measures to protect human life, to respect people's right to peaceful assembly, to take part in the conduct of public affairs, to vote and be elected, and to have equal access to elective office in view of the general elections to take place in 2021 in Uganda; *urges* in this regard, the relevant authorities to refrain from acts that could in any way undermine the civil and political rights of the five members of parliament;

10. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the President, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Attorney General and the Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda, the complainants and any third party likely to be in a position to supply relevant information, and to proceed with all necessary arrangements to organize the trial observation mission;

11. *Requests* the Committee to continue examining this case and to report back to it in due course.

Tanzania

Decision adopted unanimously by the IPU Governing Council at its 206th session (Extraordinary virtual session, 3 November 2020)

Mr. Tundu Lissu (centre), reacts to supporters upon his return on 27 July 2020 to Tanzania after three years in exile following a failed attempt on his life. STR/AFP

TZA-04 – Tundu Lissu

Alleged human rights violations

- ✓ Threats, acts of intimidation
- ✓ Arbitrary arrest and detention
- ✓ Lack of due process in proceedings against parliamentarians
- ✓ Violation of freedom of opinion and expression
- ✓ Violation of freedom of assembly and association
- ✓ Abusive revocation or suspension of the parliamentary mandate

CASE TZA-04

United Republic of Tanzania: Parliament affiliated to the IPU

Victim: A former opposition member of parliament

Qualified complainant(s): Section I.1(a) of the Committee Procedure (Annex I)

Submission of complaint: November 2019

Recent IPU decision(s): January 2020

Recent IPU mission(s): - - -

Recent Committee hearing(s): Hearing with the complainant at the 161st session of the Committee (January 2020)

Recent follow-up:
- Communication from the authorities: Letter from the Clerk of the National Assembly (October 2020)
- Communication from the complainant: October 2020
- Communications addressed to the authorities: Letters addressed to the Speaker of the National Assembly and the Minister of Home Affairs (September, July and February 2020)
- Communication addressed to the complainant: October 2020

A. Summary of the case

According to the complainant, Mr. Tundu Lissu, a long-standing opposition member of parliament belonging to the *Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo* (CHADEMA – Party for Democracy and Progress) has been facing regular and serious acts of intimidation at the hands of the Government in response to his vocal criticism.

On 7 September 2017, Mr. Lissu escaped an assassination attempt when attackers armed with AK-47s sprayed his vehicle with bullets outside his house in a normally heavily guarded government housing compound in Dodoma. Mr. Lissu was shot 16 times but survived. The complainant draws attention to several elements to suggest that the assassination attempt was carried out with government involvement.

The complainant affirms that, in recent times, Mr. Lissu was arrested eight times and charged in court six times for sedition and related offences in connection with public statements critical of the Government. According to the complainant, these charges, which are still pending, violate his rights to freedom of political association, expression and opinion, and to take part in public affairs. According to the complainant, these accusations also have to be seen in the context of undue limitations on political opposition in and outside of the National Assembly in Tanzania and of fears of reprisals.

The complainant affirms that Mr. Lissu was wrongfully stripped of his parliamentary mandate in June 2019, largely on grounds related to his absence from the National Assembly, even though the authorities and the public knew that he was out of the country recovering from the shooting.

In early 2020, Mr. Lissu, after having undergone 24 surgical interventions in Kenya and Belgium, was declared sufficiently well enough to return home. However, according to the complainant, after he made public his intention to return home, death threats made by persons known to be connected to the country's intelligence and security apparatus started to appear on social media and in the press.

Mr. Lissu travelled back to Tanzania on 27 July 2020. According to the complainant, since his return, Mr. Lissu has received numerous credible threats to his life and person, including threats of arrest from government officials and threats of murder through poisoning, which have all gone unpunished. As part of this context of intimidation, on the night of 13 August 2020, the CHADEMA headquarters in Arusha was reportedly firebombed and, a few hours later, the convoy in which Mr. Lissu was travelling was attacked with stones. The complainant affirms that there were a dozen police officers in two vehicles in the surrounding areas who took no steps to prevent the attack. Moreover, according to the complainant, on 25 August 2020, when Mr. Lissu was at the National Electoral Commission's premises in order to submit his file as a presidential candidate, unidentified persons in three vehicles reportedly planned to abduct him when he left the Commission's premises. They were allegedly all armed and were reported to be police or intelligence officers. The complainant affirms that the relevant authorities have been informed of these life-threatening reports, but that no investigations have been launched to date. On 6 October 2020, Mr. Lissu, on the way to Kibaha, just outside Dar Es Salaam on the Morogoro highway, was stopped by a heavily armed police squadron wielding automatic weapons and preventing them from continuing their journey. According to the complainant, Mr. Lissu's convoy was held for nine hours on the highway by the police as they were trying to prevent them from going to an internal party meeting.

In August 2020, Mr. Lissu was officially nominated by CHADEMA as its presidential candidate in the general election of 28 October 2020 and validated as a contender in the presidential elections by the National Electoral Commission.

In response to several requests for information in 2020 from the IPU Secretary General to the parliamentary authorities, the latter, through the Clerk of the National Assembly, finally responded in a brief letter of 20 October 2020 that the alleged death threats against Mr. Lissu since his return to Tanzania were before the courts and that the National Assembly had no mandate to interfere with matters that fell within the ambit of the law enforcement bodies, as doing so would be against *sub judice* rules. In addition, the Clerk stated that the complainant had made the allegations about renewed threats almost a year after Mr. Lissu had been stripped of his parliamentary seat in accordance with the Tanzanian Constitution and the Standing Orders of the National Assembly. In this context, the Clerk stated that parliament had no authority to involve itself in such allegations.

B. Decision

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

1. *Notes* that the complaint concerning the situation of Mr. Tundu Lissu, a member of the Tanzanian National Assembly at the time of the initial allegations, was declared admissible by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians under its procedure (January 2020);

2. *Thanks* the parliamentary authorities for their communication; *regrets* nevertheless that it does not effectively address the serious concerns at hand in this case;

3. *Is extremely concerned* about the attempt on Mr. Lissu's life, which he survived by pure miracle, and the allegation that the crime was reportedly carried out with the support of the authorities; *points out* in this regard that the complainant affirms that Mr. Lissu had previously been the direct target of serious threats and intimidation by the Government, that the armed guards normally present at the location where the shooting took place allegedly happened to be off duty that day and that CCTV footage of the crime reportedly disappeared soon after; *is concerned* that the absence of any indication that a proper investigation is ongoing, more than three years after the crime, lends credence to the allegations by the complainant in this regard; *considers* that, in light of the failed attempt on Mr. Lissu's life and the apparent lack of any proper investigation, the continued stream of alleged threats against him, including after his return to Tanzania, have to be taken extremely seriously;

4. *Urges*, therefore, the relevant authorities to carry out diligent and effective investigations, as is their duty, into the assassination attempt and the alleged death threats and other forms of intimidation that have followed since and to provide, as a matter of urgency, information on steps taken to this end; *recognizes* that responsibility for the investigations falls first and foremost to the law enforcement and judicial authorities and that adhering to the democratic principles of separation of powers and the independence of the judiciary is crucial; *considers,* nevertheless, that the *sub judice* rule cannot be invoked as an obstacle to justice or accountability and that parliament is responsible for helping to ensure that all state institutions, including the judiciary, fully abide by the rule of law; *urges*, therefore, the National Assembly to take all necessary measures to ensure strict respect for due process guarantees in ongoing proceedings against current and former parliamentarians; *wishes* to be kept informed of any action taken by the National Assembly to this end;

5. *Is troubled* to learn that Mr. Lissu was stripped of his parliamentary mandate when it was clear that he was absent for obvious reasons, of which the parliamentary authorities and the public at large were well aware; *considers* that, in implementing the rules governing absence from the National Assembly, in a situation of this nature the latter should have provided the necessary flexibility to allow Mr. Lissu to keep his seat, if only out of sympathy for what had happened to him;

6. *Is concerned* about the allegation that Mr. Lissu was arrested several times and remains subject to several criminal proceedings that may run counter to his basic human rights; *notes* that these proceedings have to be seen in the context of international reports of undue restrictions to the rights to freedom of expression and assembly in Tanzania and in the context of the recent presidential elections in which Mr. Lissu was a contender; *wishes* to receive detailed official information on the factual and legal basis for each of these steps against him;

7. *Considers* that an IPU on-site mission to Tanzania may offer a useful opportunity to discuss and clarify the important concerns that have arisen in this case with the executive, parliamentary and judicial authorities, as well as with any third party able to help it to advance towards the satisfactory settlement of the case at hand; *requests* the Secretary General to submit this suggestion to the new parliamentary authorities with a view to organizing the said mission once the necessary health and security conditions have been met; *trusts* that they will respond favourably to this suggestion;

8. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the parliamentary and other relevant national authorities, the complainant and any interested third party likely to be in a position to supply relevant information to assist it in its work;

9. *Requests* the Committee to continue examining this case and to report back to it in due course.

Zimbabwe

Decision adopted by consensus by the IPU Governing Council at its 206th session (Extraordinary virtual session, 3 November 2020) [1]

Joana Mamombe © Women's Academy for Leadership and Political Excellence (WALPE)

ZWE-45 – Joana Mamombe

Alleged human rights violations

- ✓ Abduction
- ✓ Torture, ill-treatment and other acts of violence
- ✓ Arbitrary arrest and detention
- ✓ Violation of freedom of opinion and expression
- ✓ Violation of freedom of assembly and association

Case ZWE-45

Zimbabwe: Parliament affiliated to the IPU

Victim: female, opposition member of the Parliament of Zimbabwe

Qualified complainant: Section I.1(d) of the Committee Procedure (Annex I)

Submission of complaint: May 2020

Recent IPU decision(s): May 2020

Recent IPU Mission(s): - - -

Recent Committee hearing(s): - - -

Recent follow-up:
- Communication from the authorities: Letter from the Speaker of the National Assembly (August 2020)
- Communication from the complainant: October 2020
- Communication addressed to the authorities: Letter to the Speaker of the National Assembly (August 2020)
- Communication addressed to the complainant: October 2020

A. Summary of the case

Ms. Joana Mamombe is a member of the Parliament of Zimbabwe and belongs to the opposition party Movement for Democratic Change (MDC Alliance).

According to the complainant, at around 2 p.m. on Wednesday, 13 May 2020, Ms. Mamombe and two other young women leaders, namely Ms. Cecilia Chimbiri and Ms. Netsai Marova, were abducted, tortured and sexually abused by suspected state security agents.

The complainant states that the three women were intercepted at a police roadblock manned by members of the Zimbabwe Republic Police and the Zimbabwe National Army in Harare. They were reportedly informed that they had been arrested for taking part in a peaceful flash demonstration in Warren Park in Harare on 13 May 2020 while the country was in lockdown due to COVID-19. On that day, Ms. Mamombe had led a flash protest with other young leaders over a lack of social safety nets for the poor in Zimbabwe in light of the pandemic.

[1] The delegation of Zimbabwe expressed its reservations regarding the decision.

According to the complainant, after being intercepted, Ms. Mamombe and the two other young women leaders were taken to Harare Central Police Station. Before they could be formally charged, they were taken to an undisclosed destination, where they were subjected to intense torture and degrading treatment. According to the complainant, the three suffered serious sexual abuse, as specified in detail in the complaint. According to the complainant, the three women were abandoned near Bindura at around 9 p.m. on Thursday, 14 May 2020. They were finally rescued at around 2 a.m. on Friday, 15 May 2020, by a team of family members and lawyers.

According to the complainant, petitions regarding these abuses have been submitted to Zimbabwe's Gender Commission, Human Rights Commission and the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission. The complainant affirms that these petitions have been copied to the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Parliament of Zimbabwe.

Ms. Mamombe and her two colleagues were again arrested on 10 June 2020, accused of fabricating and making false statements about their abduction, and of orchestrating the incident to cast the Government in a bad light. The women were later freed on bail after widespread international campaigns for their release. However, the complainant contends that Ms. Mamombe and her two colleagues' rights were severely restricted as part of the conditions of bail.

Ms. Mamombe was reportedly briefly arrested again on 31 July 2020, in the context of the organization of mass protests. Ms. Mamombe was allegedly arrested again on 15 September while she was in hospital receiving mental health treatment: the complainant specifies that she was arrested on the grounds that she had failed to appear for trial, despite the fact that her lawyers had provided testimonies from medical experts stating that she was unable to stand trial for health reasons. The complainant asserts that Ms. Mamombe was subsequently detained for nearly two weeks at the Chikurubi detention facility on the order of Harare magistrate Ms. Bianca Makwande, in order to have two state doctors establish her fitness to stand trial. It was reported that, in early October 2020, the High Court ordered the release of the member of parliament, ruling that it was not necessary for her to be remanded in custody for the purpose of the examination.

The complainant states that Ms. Mamombe is one of the main young women leaders in Zimbabwe and the youngest in parliament. Over the past two years she has been very vocal and outspoken over deteriorating economic conditions in Zimbabwe and their effect on women and girls. According to the complainant, her situation should also be seen in the context of the rising number of cases of human rights abuses against human rights defenders and activists in recent years in Zimbabwe.

B. Decision

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

1. *Notes* that the complaint concerning the situation of Ms. Joana Mamombe, a member of the Parliament of Zimbabwe at the time of the initial allegations, was declared admissible by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians under its procedure (May 2020);

2. *Thanks* the Speaker of the Parliament of Zimbabwe for the information provided in his letters of 27 August 2020; *notes* that the Speaker stated in his letter that the principle of *sub judice* limits parliament's possibilities of engaging for the resolution of this case;

3. *Considers*, however, that the *sub judice* rule cannot be invoked as an obstacle to justice or accountability and that parliament is responsible for helping to ensure that all state institutions fully abide by the rule of law, including the judiciary; *urges*, therefore, parliament to take all necessary measures to help ensure strict respect for due process guarantees in ongoing proceedings against parliamentarians; *requests* parliament to keep the Committee informed of action taken to this end;

4. *Is extremely concerned* about the allegations that Ms. Mamombe and two of her young female colleagues were arbitrarily detained and subjected to torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, including sexual abuse; *considers* that such allegations have to be taken extremely seriously given reports of the widespread use of abductions, torture and sexual abuse against opposition members and their supporters, the prevalence of gender-based violence in Zimbabwe and the gravity of the allegations in this case;

5. *Is shocked* to learn that, following the Committee's decision to declare the case admissible on 29 May 2020, Ms. Mamombe was arrested and imprisoned on accusations that she had made false statements regarding her abduction and torture; *is troubled* to learn from the complainant that, since her release on bail, Ms. Mamombe's rights have been severely restricted under the conditions of her bail; *is also concerned* about allegations that she has been re-arrested several times since her release on bail; *wishes* to receive detailed observations from the authorities on each of these points;

6. *Is particularly concerned* that, in the absence of information to that effect, the complaints to the relevant national institutions have allegedly not set in motion diligent investigations to identify the culprits of Ms. Mamombe's abduction and torture;

7. *Calls on* the Zimbabwean authorities to do everything possible to ensure that the rights of Ms. Mamombe are protected and that a full, independent and effective investigation is carried out into the very serious alleged human rights violations referred to in this case; *wishes* to be kept informed as a matter of urgency of progress made in the investigations;

8 *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the parliamentary authorities, other relevant national authorities, the complainant and any third party likely to be in a position to supply relevant information;

9. *Requests* the Committee to continue examining this case and to report back to it in due course.

Brazil

Decision adopted unanimously by the IPU Governing Council at its 206th session (Extraordinary virtual session, 3 November 2020)

Brazilian member of parliament David Miranda of the Socialism and Freedom Party (PSOL) poses during an interview with AFP at his office of the National Congress in Brasilia, on 5 November 2019. Sergio LIMA/AFP

BRA-15 – David Miranda

Alleged human rights violations

- ✓ Threats, acts of intimidation
- ✓ Violation of freedom of opinion and expression
- ✓ Impunity
- ✓ Other violations: Discrimination

A. Summary of the case

Mr. David Michael dos Santos Miranda is a member of the Chamber of Deputies representing the state of Rio de Janeiro, sworn in on 1 February 2019 to replace Mr. Jean Wyllys, who was forced to go into exile in January 2019. Mr. Miranda is a member of the opposition left-wing Socialism and Liberty Party (*Partido Socialismo e Liberdade* – PSOL).

Mr. Miranda is a strong advocate for the human rights of minorities. He is one of the first openly gay congressmen in Brazil and a high-profile defender of equality and inclusion. He is a well-known advocate for LGBTI[1] rights and has led efforts to fight homophobic discrimination and violence in Brazil.

The complainant claims that Mr. Miranda has been repeatedly harassed and denigrated by conservative political forces, and that, since he replaced his exiled colleague, the threats against Mr. Miranda and his family and the hostility towards the LGBTI community, have gained in intensity and scale. According to the complainant, the nature of the threats and the identity of the perpetrators are largely identical to those in the case of Mr. Wyllys.

Case BRA-15

Brazil: Parliament affiliated to the IPU

Victim: Male opposition member of parliament

Qualified complainant: Section I.(1)(a) of the Committee Procedure (Annex I)

Submission of complaint: September 2020

Recent IPU decision(s): - - -

Recent IPU mission(s): - - -

Recent Committee hearing(s): - - -

Recent follow-up:
- Communication from the authorities: - - -
- Communication from the complainant: September 2020
- Communication addressed to the authorities: Letter addressed to the President of the IPU Group (October 2020)
- Communication addressed to the complainant: September 2020

[1] LGBTI stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex.

In January 2019, Mr. Wyllys decided to give up his parliamentary seat and to go into exile, following repeated death threats and the alleged failure by the Brazilian authorities to offer adequate protection and to take effective action to investigate the threats, with the aim of holding those responsible to account. Another crucial event that allegedly led to Mr. Wyllys' decision was the assassination in March 2018 of Ms. Marielle Franco, a local female council member from the state of Rio de Janeiro. Ms. Franco was a close friend of both Mr. Wyllys and Mr. Miranda, who also vocally and actively advocated for greater respect for LGBTI rights.

B. Decision

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

1. *Notes* that the complaint concerning the case of Mr. David Miranda is admissible, given that the complaint: (i) was submitted in due form by a qualified complainant under Section I.1(a) of the Procedure for the examination and treatment of complaints (Annex I of the Revised Rules and Practices of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians); (ii) concerns an incumbent parliamentarian at the time of the initial allegations; and (iii) concerns allegations of threats, acts of intimidation, violations of freedom of opinion and expression, impunity and discrimination, allegations that fall within the Committee's mandate;

2. *Is deeply concerned* at the alleged credible death threats and harassment targeting Mr. Miranda due to his political opinions and his sexual orientation, and the allegation that his complaints about these incidents have not been examined; *urges* the competent authorities to make every effort, as is their duty, to identify the culprits and to bring them to justice, this being the only means of preventing the recurrence of such crimes; *considers* that parliament has a vested interest in using its powers to the fullest to help ensure that effective investigations into these threats are being carried out and an adequate level of protection is offered to Mr. Miranda; *wishes*, therefore, to receive official information from the parliamentary authorities on any action taken to this effect;

3. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the competent authorities, the complainants and any third party likely to be in a position to supply relevant information;

4. *Requests* the Committee to continue examining this case and to report back to it in due course.

Venezuela

Decision adopted unanimously by the IPU Governing Council at its 206th session (Extraordinary virtual session, 3 November 2020)

Venezuelan National Police members stand guard outside the National Assembly on 7 January 2020 in Caracas - Cristian HERNANDEZ/AFP

VEN-10 – Biagio Pilieri
VEN-11 – José Sánchez Montiel
VEN-12 – Hernán Claret Alemán
VEN-13 – Richard Blanco
VEN-16 – Julio Borges
VEN-19 – Nora Bracho (Ms.)
VEN-20 – Ismael Garcia
VEN-22 – Williams Dávila
VEN-24 – Nirma Guarulla (Ms.)
VEN-25 – Julio Ygarza
VEN-26 – Romel Guzamana
VEN-27 – Rosmit Mantilla
VEN-28 – Renzo Prieto
VEN-29 – Gilberto Sojo
VEN-30 – Gilber Caro
VEN-31 – Luis Florido
VEN-32 – Eudoro González
VEN-33 – Jorge Millán
VEN-34 – Armando Armas
VEN-35 – Américo De Grazia
VEN-36 – Luis Padilla
VEN-37 – José Regnault
VEN-38 – Dennis Fernández (Ms.)
VEN-39 – Olivia Lozano (Ms.)
VEN-40 – Delsa Solórzano (Ms.)
VEN-41 – Robert Alcalá
VEN-42 – Gaby Arellano (Ms.)
VEN-43 – Carlos Bastardo
VEN-44 - Marialbert Barrios (Ms.)
VEN-45 – Amelia Belisario (Ms.)
VEN-46 – Marco Bozo
VEN-48 – Yanet Fermin (Ms.)
VEN-49 – Dinorah Figuera (Ms.)
VEN-50 – Winston Flores
VEN-51 – Omar González
VEN-52 – Stalin González
VEN-85 – Franco Casella
VEN-86 – Edgar Zambrano
VEN-87 – Juan Pablo García
VEN-88 – Cesar Cadenas
VEN-89 – Ramón Flores Carrillo
VEN-91 – María Beatriz Martínez (Ms.)
VEN-92 – María C. Mulino de Saavedra (Ms.)
VEN-93 – José Trujillo
VEN-94 – Marianela Fernández (Ms.)
VEN-95 – Juan Pablo Guanipa
VEN-96 – Luis Silva
VEN-97 – Eliezer Sirit
VEN-98 – Rosa Petit (Ms.)
VEN-99 – Alfonso Marquina
VEN-100 – Rachid Yasbek
VEN-101 – Oneida Guaipe (Ms.)
VEN-102 – Jony Rahal
VEN-103 – Ylidio Abreu
VEN-104 – Emilio Fajardo
VEN-106 – Angel Alvarez
VEN-108 – Gilmar Marquez
VEN-109 – José Simón Calzadilla
VEN-110 – José Gregorio Graterol
VEN-111 – José Gregorio Hernández
VEN-112 – Mauligmer Baloa (Ms.)
VEN-113 – Arnoldo Benítez
VEN-114 – Alexis Paparoni
VEN-115 – Adriana Pichardo (Ms.)
VEN-116 – Teodoro Campos
VEN-117 – Milagros Sánchez Eulate (Ms.)
VEN-118 – Denncis Pazos
VEN-119 – Karim Vera (Ms.)
VEN-120 – Ramón López
VEN-121 – Freddy Superlano
VEN-122 – Sandra Flores-Garzón (Ms.)
VEN-123 – Armando López

VEN-53 – Juan Guaidó
VEN-54 – Tomás Guanipa
VEN-55 – José Guerra
VEN-56 – Freddy Guevara
VEN-57 – Rafael Guzmán
VEN-58 – María G. Hernández (Ms.)
VEN-59 – Piero Maroun
VEN-60 – Juan A. Mejía
VEN-61 – Julio Montoya
VEN-62 – José M. Olivares
VEN-63 – Carlos Paparoni
VEN-64 – Miguel Pizarro
VEN-65 – Henry Ramos Allup
VEN-66 – Juan Requesens
VEN-67 – Luis E. Rondón
VEN-68 – Bolivia Suárez (Ms.)
VEN-69 – Carlos Valero
VEN-70 – Milagro Valero (Ms.)
VEN-71 – German Ferrer
VEN-72 – Adriana d'Elia (Ms.)
VEN-73 – Luis Lippa
VEN-74 – Carlos Berrizbeitia
VEN-75 – Manuela Bolívar (Ms.)
VEN-76 – Sergio Vergara
VEN-78 – Oscar Ronderos
VEN-79 – Mariela Magallanes (Ms.)
VEN-80 – Héctor Cordero
VEN-81 – José Mendoza
VEN-82 – Angel Caridad
VEN-83 – Larissa González (Ms.)
VEN-84 – Fernando Orozco
VEN-124 – Elimar Díaz (Ms.)
VEN-125 – Yajaira Forero (Ms.)
VEN-126 – Maribel Guedez (Ms.)
VEN-127 – Karin Salanova (Ms.)
VEN-128 – Antonio Geara
VEN-129 – Joaquín Aguilar
VEN-130 – Juan Carlos Velasco
VEN-131 – Carmen María Sivoli (Ms.)
VEN-132 – Milagros Paz (Ms.)
VEN-133 – Jesus Yanez
VEN-134 – Desiree Barboza (Ms.)
VEN-135 – Sonia A. Medina G. (Ms.)
VEN-136 – Héctor Vargas
VEN-137 – Carlos A. Lozano Parra
VEN-138 – Luis Stefanelli
VEN-139 – William Barrientos
VEN-140 – Antonio Aranguren
VEN-141 – Ana Salas (Ms.)
VEN-142 – Ismael León
VEN-143 – Julio César Reyes
VEN-144 – Ángel Torres
VEN-145 – Tamara Adrián (Ms.)
VEN-146 – Deyalitza Aray (Ms.)
VEN-147 – Yolanda Tortolero (Ms.)
VEN-148 – Carlos Prosperi
VEN-149 – Addy Valero (Ms.)
VEN-150 – Zandra Castillo (Ms)
VEN-151 – Marco Aurelio Quiñones
VEN-152 – Carlos Andrés González
VEN-153 – Carlos Michelangeli
VEN-154 – César Alonso

Alleged human rights violations

- ✓ Torture, ill-treatment and other acts of violence
- ✓ Threats, acts of intimidation
- ✓ Arbitrary arrest and detention
- ✓ Lack of due process at the investigation stage
- ✓ Excessive delays
- ✓ Violation of the right to freedom of opinion and expression
- ✓ Violation of freedom of assembly and association
- ✓ Violation of freedom of movement
- ✓ Abusive revocation or suspension of the parliamentary mandate
- ✓ Failure to respect parliamentary immunity
- ✓ Other acts obstructing the exercise of the parliamentary mandate
- ✓ Impunity
- ✓ Other violations: Right to privacy

A. Summary of the case

The case concerns credible and serious allegations of human rights violations affecting 134 parliamentarians from the coalition of the *Mesa de la Unidad Democrática* (Democratic Unity Roundtable – MUD), against the backdrop of continuous efforts by Venezuela's executive and judicial authorities to undermine the functioning of the National Assembly and to usurp its powers. The MUD is opposed to President Maduro's government and obtained a majority of seats in the National Assembly in the parliamentary elections of 6 December 2015.

Case VEN-COLL-06

Venezuela: Parliament affiliated to the IPU

Victims: 134 opposition members of parliament (93 men and 41 women)

Qualified complainant: Section I.(1)(c) of the Committee Procedure (Annex I)

Submission of initial complaint: March 2017

Recent IPU decision(s): May 2020

Recent IPU mission(s): - - -

Recent Committee hearing(s): Hearings with members of the governing and opposition parties at the 141st IPU Assembly (October 2019)

Recent follow-up:
- Communication from the authorities: Letter from the Speaker of the National Assembly (February 2019)
- Communication from the complainant: September 2020
- Communications addressed to the authorities: Letters to the President of Venezuela (February and August 2020)
- Communication addressed to the complainant: September 2020

On 30 December 2015, the Supreme Court ordered the suspension of four members of parliament, three of them from the MUD, following allegations of fraud. The National Assembly decided to disregard the ruling, considering the allegations to be baseless, which led the Supreme Court to declare all of the Assembly's decisions null and void.

Almost all parliamentarians listed in the present case have been attacked or otherwise intimidated with impunity by law enforcement officers and/or pro-government officials and supporters during demonstrations, inside parliament and/or at their homes. Protests intensified in Venezuela after President Maduro announced the convening of a national constituent assembly – which was subsequently established on 30 July 2017 – to rewrite the Constitution, but which instead has since appropriated and exercised many of the constitutional functions assigned to the National Assembly, which has not received any government funding since August 2016.

At least 11 National Assembly members were arrested and released later, reportedly due to politically motivated legal proceedings. In all these cases, the members were detained without due respect for the constitutional provisions on parliamentary immunity. There are also serious concerns regarding respect for due process and their treatment in detention. People associated with opposition parliamentarians have also been detained and harassed.

At least 17 parliamentarians have gone into exile, sought the protection of foreign embassies in Caracas or gone into hiding due to continued harassment. Six have been barred from holding public office and the passports of at least 13 members of parliament have been confiscated, not been renewed, or cancelled by the authorities, reportedly as a means of pressure and to prevent them from travelling abroad to denounce what is happening in Venezuela.

On 31 August 2020, President Maduro pardoned 110 members of the political opposition, who had been accused of committing criminal acts. The decision implied the closure of ongoing criminal proceedings against 23 parliamentarians listed in the present case and the release of four of them. Nevertheless, according to the complainant, the political persecution of opposition members of parliament continues. In his programme *Con el Mazo Dando*, Mr. Diosdado Cabello, President of the National Constituent Assembly, referring to the presidential pardon decree, warned that "if these people start tomorrow to invent again there will always be the judiciary to act". The Attorney General has also publicly threatened to bring the beneficiaries of the presidential pardon to justice again if they "re-offend" in an alleged crime similar to the one that led to their prosecution.

In its resolution 42/25 of 27 September 2019, the United Nations Human Rights Council established an independent fact-finding mission on Venezuela, the final report of which was published in September 2020. Among other findings, the report states that there were reasonable grounds to believe that the following crimes against humanity were committed in Venezuela: murder, imprisonment and other severe deprivations of physical liberty, torture, rape and other forms of sexual violence, enforced disappearance of persons, and other inhumane acts of a similar nature intentionally causing great suffering or serious injury to body or to mental or physical health. Some of the same conduct may also constitute the crime against humanity of persecution, as defined by the Rome Statute. The mission also had reasonable grounds to believe that the President, the Minister of People's Power for Interior Relations, Justice and Peace and the Minister for Defence ordered or contributed to the commission of the crimes documented in the report and, having the effective ability to do so, failed to take preventive and repressive measures. According to the mission report, opposition parliamentarians became a focus of repression after the opposition won a majority of seats in the National Assembly.

Parliamentary elections are scheduled to take place on 6 December 2020. According to the complainant, in the lead-up to the elections, the Supreme Court has adopted a number of decisions that remove minimum guarantees for a free and fair parliamentary election, including by appointing new leaders subordinate to Mr. Maduro on the main opposition political parties, appointing the board of directors of the National Electoral Council which, according to the Constitution, is the exclusive responsibility of the National Assembly, and granting powers to the National Electoral Council to legislate on electoral matters, which also violates the Venezuelan Constitution. For its part, the National Electoral Council has increased the number of members of parliament to be elected, disregarding the constitutional provisions on the matter, and imposed extremely complex processes for validation of political parties, after which very few parties have been able to register for the

elections. It should also be noted that the complainant has repeatedly pointed out that the composition of the current National Electoral Council and the Supreme Court, which both have important powers regarding electoral matters, is severely flawed and totally subject to executive control.
Long-standing efforts since 2013 to send a delegation of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians to Venezuela have failed in the absence of clear and decisive cooperation from the Government to welcome and work with the delegation. In October 2018, the IPU governing bodies decided that the mission would be of a joint nature, comprising members of the IPU Executive Committee and the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, and focusing on both the larger political matters at stake in the Venezuelan crisis and the specific concerns expressed by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians.

B. Decision

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

1. *Denounces* the extensive repression to which the authorities and their supporters have resorted over the last five years against parliamentarians because of their political opinions, as attested by the continuous extremely serious incidents of ill-treatment, harassment, threats and stigmatization carried out by state agents, paramilitary groups and violent groups of government supporters in a climate of impunity; *also denounces* the multiple steps taken by the executive and judicial authorities over the course of the current legislature to undermine the integrity and independence of the National Assembly; *considers* that this situation taken as a whole amounts to a clear attempt to thwart the effective exercise of the will of the people as expressed in the election results of December 2015; *recalls* that members of parliament must be free to seek, receive and impart information and ideas without fear of reprisal, and that parliament can fulfil its democratic role only if its members enjoy the right to freedom of expression and are able to speak on behalf of the people they represent;

2. *Urges once again,* the authorities to put an immediate end to all forms of harassment against members of the National Assembly, to ensure that all relevant state authorities respect their human rights and parliamentary immunity, to fully investigate and establish accountability for reported violations of their rights, and to allow the National Assembly and all its members to carry out their constitutional functions in full;

3. *Takes note with deep concern* of the findings and recommendations contained in the recently published mission report of the United Nations Human Rights Council independent international fact-finding mission on Venezuela, which gives further weight to the accusations of political repression and the responsibility of the State at the highest level; *expresses its firm hope*, in this regard, that the State of Venezuela, with the support of the international community, will be able to address the extremely serious violations and crimes documented in the report;

4. *Deeply regrets* that the Government of Venezuela has still failed to offer any assurances in writing that the long-proposed IPU mission to Venezuela can finally take place; *remains convinced* that such a mission could help address the concerns at hand; *requests, once again*, therefore, the Secretary General to work with the parliamentary and executive authorities of Venezuela with a view to the mission taking place as soon as the COVID-19 pandemic-related travel restrictions are lifted, on the basis of a written official communication on their part guaranteeing that such a mission can take place under the conditions required for it to be effective;

5. *Reaffirms*, *once again,* its view that the issues in the cases at hand are part of the larger political crisis in Venezuela, which can only be solved through political dialogue and by the Venezuelans themselves; *reaffirms* the IPU's readiness to assist in any efforts aimed at strengthening democracy in Venezuela; and *requests* the relevant authorities to provide further official information on how this assistance can best be provided;

6. *Solemnly affirms*, in keeping with the letter and spirit of the IPU Universal Declaration on Democracy, that the key element in the exercise of democracy is the holding of free and fair elections enabling the people's will to be expressed, on the basis of universal, equal and secret suffrage so that all voters can choose their representatives in conditions of equality, openness

and transparency; *expresses its deep concern*, therefore, that the restrictions in place and the institutional framework governing the legislative elections scheduled for December 2020 appear to seriously undermine the level playing field required for opposition members and their supporters to exercise their basic human right to take part in the conduct of public affairs on a par with the ruling party and its supporters; *urges*, in this regard, the relevant authorities to take all necessary measures to address these matters without delay;

7. *Urges* all sides to refrain from violence and also the relevant authorities to take all necessary measures to protect human life, to respect people's rights to peaceful assembly, to freedom of expression, to take part in the conduct of public affairs, to vote and be elected, and to have equal access to elective office in view of the parliamentary elections to take place in December 2020 in Venezuela; *urges*, in this regard, the relevant authorities to refrain from acts that could in any way undermine the rights of all current members of the National Assembly;

8. *Calls on* all IPU Member Parliaments, IPU permanent observers, parliamentary assemblies and relevant human rights organizations to take concrete actions in support of the urgent resolution of the individual cases at hand and the political crisis in Venezuela in a manner consistent with democratic and human rights values; and *hopes* to be able to rely on the assistance of all relevant regional and international organizations;

9. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the relevant authorities, the complainant and any third party likely to be in a position to supply relevant information;

10. *Requests* the Committee to continue examining this case and to report back to it in due course.

Mongolia

Decision adopted unanimously by the IPU Governing Council at its 206th session (Extraordinary virtual session, 3 November 2020)

© Zorig Foundation

MNG-01 – Zorig Sanjasuuren

Alleged human rights violations

- ✓ Murder
- ✓ Impunity

A. Summary of the case

Mr. Zorig Sanjasuuren ("Mr. Zorig") was assassinated on 2 October 1998. Regarded by many as the father of the democratic movement in Mongolia in the 1990s, Mr. Zorig was a member of parliament and acting Minister of Infrastructure at the time and was being considered as a candidate for the position of Prime Minister on the day he was killed.

Between 2015 and 2017, three suspects were identified, arrested, expeditiously tried and sentenced based on classified evidence, during trials held behind closed doors. Several reports indicated that the suspects were allegedly tortured to make false confessions and framed by the intelligence services. The murder of Mr. Zorig is widely believed to have been a political assassination that was covered up. The investigation into the mastermind(s) of his murder is still open and has not yielded any results yet.

Despite the governmental declassification order of the files relating to the Zorig case in December 2017, the lack of transparency is still prevalent, as the court verdicts have remained inaccessible.

Since the submission of the complaint 20 years ago, the Committee has undertaken three fact-finding missions to Mongolia at crucial phases in the case. In June 2019, the Committee returned to Mongolia following the invitation of the parliamentary authorities and was updated on the important developments in the case, in particular the release of a video in March 2019 showing the torture and ill-treatment of two of the convicts, Ms. Chimgee and Mr. Sodnomdarjaa, as well as the establishment of a parliamentary *ad hoc* committee on the case of

Case MNG-01

Mongolia: Parliament affiliated to the IPU

Victim: Member of the majority

Qualified complainant: Section I.1.(a) of the Committee Procedure (Annex I)

Submission of complaints: October 2000, March 2001, September 2015

Recent IPU decision(s): October 2019

Recent IPU Mission(s): August 2001, September 2015, September 2017, June 2019

Recent Committee hearing(s): Hearing with the Mongolian delegation to the 141st IPU Assembly (October 2019)

Recent follow up:
- Communications from the authorities: Letter from the Vice-Chairman of the State Great Hural (September 2020); letter from the Chairman of the *Ad Hoc* Committee (October 2019)
- Communications from the complainant: August 2020
- Communications addressed to the authorities: Letter addressed to the Vice-Chairman of the State Great Hural (September 2020)
- Communication addressed to the complainant: September 2020

Mr. Zorig. The two convicts in question were transferred to the prison hospital as a result of the video and a criminal case was opened against intelligence and law enforcement officials allegedly responsible for torturing them. Nevertheless, they are still being held in detention.

As part of its findings, the delegation welcomed the establishment of an *ad hoc* committee on the Zorig case (the *Ad Hoc* Committee), in line with the IPU Committee's recommendations. It also welcomed the opportunity to meet with the three convicts, as well as to watch the video tape showing alleged acts of torture and ill-treatment. However, the delegation failed to understand the reasons preventing the immediate release of Ms. Chimgee and Mr. Sodnomdarjaa given the recent turn of events.

On 22 July 2020, the Ulaanbaatar Court of First Instance concluded that Ms. Chimgee and Mr. Sodnomdarjaa had been tortured during the investigation into the murder of Mr. Zorig and convicted the former Chief of the General Intelligence Agency, Mr. Bat Khurts, as well as other intelligence officers to prison terms ranging from one to three years' imprisonment. The release of Ms. Chimgee and Mr. Sodnomdarjaa was contingent upon the confirmation of their torture and the conviction of those responsible. However, the complainants explained that the defendants appealed the court's decision. The appeal proceedings could last until the end of 2020. Only then could Ms. Chimgee and Mr. Sodnomdarjaa be released if the court of appeal decides to uphold the decision of the first-instance court and orders a retrial. In their letter of 18 September 2020, the parliamentary authorities confirmed that Ms. Chimgee and Mr. Sodnomdarjaa had not been released as court proceedings were still ongoing.

Following the parliamentary elections that took place in Mongolia in June 2020, the *Ad Hoc* Committee on the Zorig case was dissolved.

In its letter of 18 September 2020, the State Great Hural stated that, upon receiving the recent Committee's mission report in October 2019, it translated it into Mongolian and delivered it to the relevant authorities. The State Great Hural added that the relevant authorities had yet to inform it of any actions they had taken.

B. Decision

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

1. *Thanks* the Mongolian parliamentary authorities for the information provided in their letter of 18 September 2020; *regrets,* nevertheless, the lack of response regarding the Committee's mission report of June 2019*; further reiterates its wish* to be kept regularly apprised of all developments related to the case;

2. *Urges once more* the authorities to take appropriate measures to implement the findings and recommendations of the mission report, including the immediate release of Ms. Chimgee and Mr. Sodnomdarjaa; *further urges* the authorities to seriously consider abandoning the legal proceedings against them, while ensuring that the persons responsible for their wrongful conviction are held to account; *renews its call* for the authorities to provide copies of all the court verdicts in this case;

3. *Firmly reiterates* that any further delays in establishing the identity of those responsible for murdering Mr. Zorig, including the mastermind(s), are unacceptable; *urges* the authorities to make more robust efforts to an effective investigation into establishing the identity of those accountable for this crime and to make information regularly available to the public at large on progress; *considers* in this regard that only full transparency can turn the tide of mistrust and secrecy that has come to define this murder case;

4. *Stresses* that parliamentary oversight remains crucial towards helping ensure that justice finally prevails in this case; *calls on* the State Great Hural to set up again the *Ad Hoc* Committee on the Zorig case to continue monitoring the ongoing investigation into the mastermind(s) and the judicial proceedings relating to the torture of the two convicts;

5. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the relevant authorities, the complainant and any third party likely to be in a position to supply relevant information;

6. *Requests* the Committee to continue examining this case and to report back to it in due course.

Philippines

Decision adopted unanimously by the IPU Governing Council at its 206th session (Extraordinary virtual session, 3 November 2020)

Philippine Senator Leila de Lima is escorted by police after her arrest at the Senate in Manila on 24 February 2017 © Ted Aljibe/AFP

PHL-08 – Leila de Lima

Alleged human rights violations

- ✓ Threats, acts of intimidation
- ✓ Arbitrary arrest and detention
- ✓ Lack of due process in proceedings against parliamentarians
- ✓ Violation of freedom of opinion and expression

A. Summary of the case

Ms. Leila de Lima served as Chairperson of the Philippines Commission on Human Rights from May 2008 to June 2010. In that capacity, she led a series of investigations into alleged extrajudicial killings linked to the so-called Davao Death Squad in Davao City, where Mr. Duterte had been long-time mayor, and concluded that Mr. Duterte, now President of the Philippines, was behind the Davao Death Squad.

In 2010, Ms. de Lima was appointed Secretary of Justice. She resigned from this position in October 2015 to focus on her campaign for a senate seat in the May 2016 elections, a bid that was successful. In August 2016, as Chair of the Senate Committee on Justice and Human Rights, she launched an inquiry into the killings of thousands of alleged drug users and drug dealers, which are alleged to have taken place since President Duterte took office in June 2016. Since becoming senator, she has been the target of acts of intimidation and denigration, including by President Duterte himself.

Senator de Lima was arrested and detained on 24 February 2017 over accusations of receiving drug money to finance her senatorial campaign for a senate seat. The charges, in three different cases, were brought in the wake of an inquiry by the House of Representatives into drug

Case PHL-08

Philippines: Parliament affiliated to the IPU

Victim: Female opposition member of parliament

Qualified complainant(s): Section I.(1)(d) of the Committee Procedure (Annex I)

Submission of complaint: September 2016

Recent IPU decision(s): April 2019

Recent IPU mission(s): May 2017

Recent Committee hearing(s): - - -

Recent follow-up:
- Communication from the authorities: Letter from the Director General and Secretary of the IPU Group of the Philippines (April 2019)
- Communication from the complainant: October 2020
- Communication addressed to the authorities: Letter addressed to the President of the Senate (September 2020)
- Communication addressed to the complainant: October 2020

trading in New Bilibid Prison, and Senator de Lima's responsibility for such while she was Secretary of Justice. The House-led inquiry was launched one week after she initiated her inquiry in the Senate into the extrajudicial killings.

On 27 July and 10 August 2018, Senator de Lima was indicted in two of the three cases that are currently before Branches 205 and 256 of the Regional Trial Court – Muntinlupa City. While the third case has gone on intermittently due to vacancies in court, with the trial having resumed only on 9 October 2020, hearings to present prosecution witnesses in the two other cases before Regional Trial Court Branch 205, mostly involving convicted drug traffickers, were scheduled well into 2020, with twice-monthly hearings scheduled in each case on average. It was later discovered that the convicted drug traffickers received special treatment in prison and were coerced into testifying against Senator de Lima after being viciously stabbed in prison in 2016. In June and August 2020, Senator de Lima filed two motions for release on bail on the grounds that there was insufficient evidence against her in the two cases before the court. The prosecution is likely to wrap up its work in both ongoing cases by November 2020, with remaining hearings being accessible for remote online monitoring. Thereafter, the court is likely to rule on the two pending motions for bail soon.

A May 2017 mission to the Philippines by the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians concluded that there was no evidence to justify the criminal cases against Senator de Lima. Since then, the IPU has called for the release of Senator de Lima and for the case against her to be dropped unless cogent evidence becomes available soon. On 30 November 2018, the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention concluded that Senator de Lima's detention was arbitrary and that her immediate release was in order.

Although Senator de Lima has remained very politically active over the years while in detention and receives newspapers, journals and books, she has no access to the Internet, a computer, TV, radio, or to an air-conditioning unit despite a doctor's recommendation. Senator de Lima was allegedly kept in incommunicado detention from 25 April to 10 June 2020, purportedly for the purposes of stopping the spread of Covid-19. Although the situation regarding Senator de Lima's visiting rights has since improved, a number of restrictions thereto remain in place.

On 27 April 2020, the Senate adopted a motion to allow teleconferencing in plenary and committee hearings. That same day, the Senate President, however, reportedly publicly stated that Senator de Lima would not be allowed to take part in such virtual proceedings given that the Senate has no jurisdiction over her. According to the complainant, this is a further attempt to prevent her from fully performing her role as Senator, despite the clear Supreme Court jurisprudence on this point.
On 7 November 2016, Senator de Lima had filed a petition for writ of *habeas data* against President Duterte before the Supreme Court, requesting that the Court, *inter alia*, order President Duterte and any of his representatives to cease: seeking details about her private life outside the realm of legitimate public concern or making statements maligning her as a woman and injuring her dignity as a human being; discriminating against her on the basis of gender; describing or publicizing her alleged sexual conduct; engaging in psychological violence against her; and otherwise violating her rights or engaging in acts that are contrary to law, good morals, good customs, public policy and/or public interest. On 18 October 2019, the Supreme Court had dismissed the petition for writ of *habeas data* on the grounds that the President is immune from suit during his incumbency and tenure.

A. Decision

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

1. *Remains deeply concerned* that Senator de Lima has been in detention for three and a half years without any serious evidence presented against her to justify the charges; *recalls* in this regard the principle that justice delayed is justice denied;

2. *Recalls also* that there are multiple, strong signs that the steps taken against Senator de Lima come in response to her vocal opposition to the way in which President Duterte was waging a war on drugs, including her denunciation of his alleged responsibility for extrajudicial killings; *points out* in this regard the repeated violation of the principle of the presumption of innocence, the dubious choice of jurisdiction to present the accusations against her, the timing of the

criminal proceedings, the amendment of the charges and the reliance on testimonies of convicted drug traffickers, who were either promised favourable treatment in return, subjected to physical intimidation in prison, or have an axe to grind against Senator de Lima as a result of her efforts to dismantle their drug trafficking operations when she was Secretary of Justice;

3. *Renews it call*, in light of the foregoing, for Senator de Lima to be released immediately and for the legal proceedings against her to be dropped; *calls on* the authorities to take the necessary action forthwith;

4. *Requests* that, should charges not be dropped, an IPU trial observer continue to monitor and report on respect for fair-trial standards in the cases before Branches 205 and 256 of the Regional Trial Court in Muntinlupa City, including in order to assess if and how existing concerns about the legality and fairness of the proceedings are properly reviewed;

5. *Regrets* that it was not possible for the Supreme Court to rule on the public campaign of vilification of Senator de Lima by the highest state authorities, thereby missing an important opportunity to condemn and end the public degrading treatment to which she has been subjected as a woman parliamentarian;

6. *Is concerned* that Senator de Lima has not been able to benefit from the Senate's move towards teleconferencing; *considers* that the parliamentary authorities can do much more to help ensure that she can fully participate in the work of the Senate and effectively represent the interests of the 14 million Filipinos who elected her, also bearing in mind past initiatives by the Senate in other similar cases, well before teleconferencing was allowed; *wishes* to be kept informed on this point;

7. *Is concerned* about limitations imposed on Senator de Lima's visiting rights and continued lack of access to the Internet, TV, radio, tablet or laptop; *regrets* furthermore that the authorities have also yet to provide her with an air-conditioning unit, as ordered by her doctor; *sincerely hopes* that the relevant authorities will take the necessary steps to address these matters for as long as she remains in detention; and *wishes* to be kept informed in this regard;

8. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the relevant authorities, including the Secretary of Justice, the Prosecutor's Office and the relevant courts, the complainant and any third party likely to be in a position to supply relevant information;

9. *Requests* the Committee to continue examining this case and to report back to it in due course.

Belarus

Decision adopted unanimously by the IPU Governing Council at its 206th session (Extraordinary virtual session, 3 November 2020)

BLR-05 – Victor Gonchar

Case BLR-05

Belarus: Parliament affiliated to the IPU

Victim: Male opposition member of parliament

Qualified complainant(s): Section I.(1)(a) of the Committee Procedure (Annex I)

Submission of complaint: August 1998

Recent IPU decision(s): February 2019

Recent IPU mission(s): November 1999

Recent Committee hearing(s): - - -

Recent follow-up:
- Communications from the authorities: Letters from the Chairman of the Committee on National Security of the House of Representatives dated July 2012 and January 2013
- Interview with sources: July 2020
- Communication from the complainant: August 2020
- Communication addressed to the authorities: Letter addressed to the Chairman of the House of Representatives (October 2020)
- Communication addressed to the complainant: August 2020

Alleged human rights violations

✓ Enforced disappearance
✓ Impunity

A. Summary of the case

Mr. Victor Gonchar disappeared in September 1999, along with Mr. Anatoly Krasovsky. Mr. Gonchar had been the Deputy Speaker of the 13th Supreme Soviet and a major political opponent of the President of Belarus, Mr. Aleksandr Lukashenko. He was the third prominent opposition figure in Belarus to have “disappeared” since April 1999.
Mr. Gonchar was expected to play a leading role in the talks organized by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe between the opposition and President Lukashenko. At the time of his disappearance, he was due to chair an extended parliamentary session which could have set in motion the process to impeach the President.

Allegations have been made attributing his "disappearance" to State-run death squads known as SOBR (special rapid response unit) on the personal order of the former Minister of the Interior and of the Secretary General of the Belarusian Security Council. Official investigations have proved unavailing. Key officials suspected of involvement were never questioned and were subsequently promoted.

A report on disappearances in Belarus issued in February 2004 by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe concluded that no proper investigation had been conducted, and that senior state officials may be implicated in the disappearances of several opposition figures, including Mr. Gonchar. The report mentioned numerous pieces of evidence pointing towards the involvement of the State in

the disappearance, including evidence that a gun used for carrying out the death penalty against Mr. Gonchar was signed out by order of the Minister of the Interior on the date of Mr. Gonchar's disappearance. The authorities objected to the report's conclusions.

In March 2012, the United Nations Human Rights Committee also concluded, in the case of the enforced disappearance of Mr. Krasovsky, that Belarus had violated its obligations to investigate properly and take appropriate remedial action. It requested Belarus to provide the victims with an effective remedy, including a thorough and diligent investigation into the disappearance and prosecution and punishment of the perpetrators. No implementation measures have been taken by the authorities.

No information from the Parliament of Belarus or from the judicial authorities has been forthcoming since January 2012. Meetings with the leader of the Belarus delegation to the 132nd IPU Assembly (Hanoi, March–April 2015) and between the IPU President and the Speaker of the House of Representatives (September 2015) have been inconclusive, as the authorities have continued to affirm that the investigation was ongoing and confidential and that they did not need assistance. They have failed to provide any other information or to respond to the Committee's long-standing request to conduct a visit to Belarus.

The families and their lawyers have never been granted access to the investigation files, despite numerous petitions. Their requests – and those of the opposition United Civil Party – for the investigation into state officials and other leaders have remained unanswered. They had, *inter alia*, asked for the Prosecutor General to take into account, and investigate, documentaries and video testimonies aired on TV pointing to the involvement of the same top officials, in particular the documentary "Krestny Batka" (The Nation's Godfather), aired by the Russian channel NTV in the summer of 2010, and the important video testimony (allegedly dating from 2003 and aired in September 2018) of Mr. Viktor Zabolotsky, a Belarusian citizen who claimed to have been near the crime scene at the time of Mr. Gonchar's disappearance. The complainant indicated that the families had been informed on 6 December 2018 by the investigative authorities that the investigation had been suspended, as they had failed to identify the perpetrator, but that they would reopen it, should they identify a suspect. However, a prominent journalism investigation story based on the accounts of Mr. Yuri Garavsky, a new witness and self-confessed accomplice to the alleged murder of Mr. Gonchar, caused a sensation in the country when it came out in December 2019. According to an official letter provided by the complainant, the investigation into the disappearance of Mr. Gonchar was reopened on 24 December 2019, but was suspended once again in February 2020.

The United Nations Human Rights Council has repeatedly expressed deep concern at the continuing violations of human rights in Belarus, which it found were of a systemic and systematic nature, as well as at the use of torture and ill-treatment in custody, the lack of response by the Government of Belarus to cases of enforced disappearances of political opponents, and the lack of participation of opposition political parties in parliament. Most recently, the Council held an urgent debate on the situation in Belarus following the presidential elections of August 2020, and adopted a resolution condemning the reported use of violence and torture against thousands of protestors who had mobilized after the elections over allegations of massive voter fraud.

B. Decision

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

1. *Expresses grave concern* over the complete and persistent impunity in this case, over 20 years after the disappearance of Mr. Victor Gonchar;

2. *Deeply regrets* the lack of cooperation from the Belarusian authorities and that the Belarusian Parliament chose not to meet virtually with the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians at its most recent session; *recalls* in this regard that the Committee's procedure is based on ongoing and constructive dialogue with the authorities, first and foremost the parliament of the country concerned;

3. *Notes with concern* that, during a hearing with the Committee at its most recent session, Mr. Yuri Garavsky provided detailed information on the circumstances surrounding the abduction and assassination of Mr. Gonchar and Mr. Anatoly Krasovsky, including the coordinates of the location where the bodies had allegedly been buried within the former base compound of Begoml, by direct order of the Belarusian authorities; *questions* why, despite abundant new evidence, the investigation had been allegedly suspended again in February 2020; *wishes* to receive official information on the current status of the investigation; and *requests* the parliamentary authorities to keep the IPU informed of any relevant developments in this regard;

4. *Points out* that the authorities have put forward no information to sustain their assertion that a genuine investigation into the disappearance was conducted over the past 20 years; *considers* that this gives serious weight to the mounting information and indications that have emerged over the years pointing to the direct responsibility of the Belarusian authorities for the disappearance of Mr. Gonchar;

5. *Recalls* that impunity, by shielding those responsible from judicial action and accountability, decisively encourages the perpetration of further serious human rights violations, and that attacks against the life of members of parliament, when left unpunished, not only violate the fundamental rights of individual parliamentarians and of those who elected them, but also affect the integrity of parliament and its ability to fulfil its role as an institution – even more so when leading figures of parliament and the opposition are targeted in the context of a broader pattern of repression, as in the present case; *points out* that the widespread or systematic practice of enforced disappearance constitutes a crime against humanity; *stresses* the legitimate right of the relatives of the victims to know about the fate of the disappeared persons, the circumstances of their enforced disappearance and to receive adequate compensation;

6. *Reaffirms its view* that the Parliament of Belarus continues to have a direct responsibility for ensuring that every effort is made by all relevant authorities to investigate thoroughly and diligently the many leads and concerns that have emerged, to identify and punish those responsible for the enforced disappearance of one of its members and to do everything possible to ensure that such violations do not recur in the future; *urges* parliament to take decisive and effective measures to this end; and *wishes* to be informed of progress made in this regard;

7. *Deeply regrets* that the long-requested mission by the Committee to Belarus to obtain first-hand information on the investigation and any prospects for progress in this case has still not received official endorsement from the national authorities; *expresses the firm hope* that parliament and other relevant authorities will respond favourably to this request so that a Committee delegation can travel to Belarus as soon as the COVID-19 pandemic-related travel restrictions are lifted;

8. *Calls* on all IPU Member Parliaments, IPU permanent observers, parliamentary assemblies and human rights organizations active in the region to take concrete actions in support of the urgent resolution of this case in a manner consistent with respect for democratic values and human rights; and *hopes* to be able to rely on the assistance of all relevant regional and international organizations;

9. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the relevant authorities and to any third party likely to be in a position to supply relevant information, as well as to continue seeking the authorities' agreement to a visit;

10. *Requests* the Committee to continue examining this case and to report back to it in due course.

Egypt

Decision adopted by consensus by the IPU Governing Council at its 206th session (Extraordinary virtual session, 3 November 2020) [1]

Mostafa al-Nagar © Photo courtesy of Belady U.S., An Island for Humanity

EGY-07 – Mostafa al-Nagar

Alleged human rights violations

- ✓ Enforced disappearance
- ✓ Threats, acts of intimidation
- ✓ Violation of freedom of opinion and expression
- ✓ Failure to respect parliamentary immunity
- ✓ Impunity

A. Summary of the case

Mr. Mostafa al-Nagar allegedly disappeared in the southern governorate of Aswan on 27 September 2018. His family and lawyers have been unable to contact him or obtain information on his whereabouts. They fear that he might have been arbitrarily arrested and held incommunicado.

The complainants allege that Mr. al-Nagar was a symbol of the 2011 revolution and a vocal critic of the Egyptian Government during his parliamentary term, which lasted from 23 January to 14 July 2012, when the Egyptian Parliament was dissolved. In December 2017, he was fined and sentenced to three years in prison for "insulting the judiciary" in a speech he reportedly delivered during a parliamentary sitting in 2012. In its ruling of 30 December 2017, the Cairo Criminal Court found that Mr. al-Nagar's statements at a parliamentary sitting in 2012 had been intended to defame and harm the judiciary and judges, and disregarded his parliamentary immunity.

Case EGY-07

Egypt: Parliament affiliated to the IPU

Victim: male, independent member of the House of Representatives

Qualified complainant(s): Section I.1.(a) and (d) of the Committee Procedure (Annex I)

Submission of complaint: February 2020

Recent IPU decision(s): May 2020

Recent IPU Mission(s): - - -

Recent Committee hearing(s): - - -

Recent follow-up:
- Communication from the authorities: - - -
- Communication from the complainant: October 2020
- Communication addressed to the authorities: Letter addressed to the Speaker of the House of Representatives (September 2020)
- Communication addressed to the complainants: October 2020

[1] The Egyptian delegation expressed its reservations regarding the decision.

Mr. al-Nagar has not served his time in prison as he has remained in hiding, although it was clear to his family members where he was. He disappeared a few days before his appeal trial, which took place on 15 October 2018.

The complainants reported that, on 10 October 2018, Mr. al-Nagar's family received an anonymous telephone call informing it that he was in police custody at Aswan's Central Security Forces Al-Shallal camp. Despite Mr. al-Nagar's lawyer's request to the Egyptian authorities for an official response concerning his client's alleged detention in the Al-Shallal camp, no information was provided in this regard. Egypt's State Information Service denied playing a role in Mr. al-Nagar's disappearance and said, in an official statement issued on 18 October 2018, that he had wilfully disappeared to avoid serving his prison sentence, accusing him of being a fugitive.

The Egyptian Court of Cassation adopted a decision on 15 October 2018, in which the Court allegedly declared Mr. al-Nagar's appeal inadmissible and upheld the sentence against him *in abstentia* because he had not been present at the proceedings and had not complied with a 2017 imprisonment order. In its decision, the Court of Cassation also found that it was not competent to examine the appeal, since the appealed decision was not final, as it had not been handed down by a "last degree" court. According to the Court of Cassation, it was still possible to challenge the 2017 decision before the Court of Appeal.

On 29 July 2019, the complainants filed a complaint at the Cairo Court of Administrative Justice against the Egyptian Ministry of the Interior for failing to disclose Mr. al-Nagar's whereabouts and failing to make serious efforts to locate him. In its decision handed down on 18 January 2020, the Cairo Court of Administrative Justice recalled the State's responsibility, and indicated that the State Information Service statement was insufficient. The Court noted that the State had a duty to locate disappeared individuals, especially when a complaint had been filed about their disappearance. The complainants indicated that the Egyptian authorities had not yet responded to the ruling of 18 January 2020.

During its virtual session held in October 2020, the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians invited the Egyptian authorities for a hearing. The parliamentary authorities had initially accepted the Committee's invitation. However, due to the parliamentary elections, the authorities were unable to meet with the Committee.

B. Decision

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

1. *Notes* that the complaint concerning the situation of Mr. Mostafa al-Nagar, a member of the Egyptian Parliament at the time of the initial alleged violation of his parliamentary immunity and right to freedom of expression, was declared admissible by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians under its procedure on 29 May 2020;

2. *Thanks* the Egyptian parliamentary authorities for their willingness to meet with the Committee for a hearing; *regrets,* nevertheless, that such a hearing did not take place; *points out* that the Egyptian authorities have yet to share their views about the case, despite several previous requests;

3. *Is deeply concerned* by the alleged disappearance of Mr. al-Nagar since 2018 and the absence of any measures taken by the authorities to investigate his disappearance despite the complainants' repeated requests; *questions* why the Egyptian Government is unable to locate Mr. al-Nagar considering that he was under surveillance, as alleged by the complainants; *considers* that Mr. al-Nagar's alleged disappearance should be taken seriously by the authorities regardless of his conviction and the fact that he did not serve his prison sentence;

4. *Stresses* that the State of Egypt is duty-bound to do everything possible to find Mr. al-Nagar and that by not taking any measure to locate him under the pretext that he is a fugitive, the authorities are wilfully denying justice to his relatives, who have the legitimate right to know about his fate, and are giving weight to the complainants' allegations that they are partly or wholly responsible for his disappearance; *stresses* that the authorities have yet to provide convincing evidence to refute the allegation that Mr. al-Nagar is being held incommunicado;

5. *Urges*, therefore, the authorities, in particular the Ministry of the Interior, to take appropriate measures to locate Mr. al-Nagar in accordance with the decision of the Administrative Court of Justice issued in January 2020 and to start a genuine and effective investigation into his disappearance; *wishes* to be kept informed as a matter of urgency about steps taken in this regard;

6. *Is concerned* that Mr. al-Nagar's conviction seemed to be in violation of his parliamentary immunity and hindered the legitimate exercise of his parliamentary mandate; *wishes* to receive copies of the decisions of the Cairo Criminal Court and Court of Cassation of 2017 and 2018 respectively;

7. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the relevant authorities, the complainants, the Minister of Justice, the Minister of the Interior and any third party likely to be in a position to supply relevant information on the whereabouts of Mr. al-Nagar;

8. *Requests* the Committee to continue examining this case and to report back to it in due course.

Palestine/Israel

Decision adopted by consensus by the IPU Governing Council at its 206th session (Extraordinary virtual session, 3 November 2020) [1]

Ramallah, 15 April 2015 – Palestinian protesters wave flags bearing portraits of Fatah leader, Marwan Barghouti, during a march to mark the anniversary of his arrest. AFP Photo/Abbas Momani

PSE-02 – Marwan Barghouti

Alleged human rights violations

- ✓ Torture, ill-treatment and other acts of violence
- ✓ Arbitrary arrest and detention
- ✓ Lack of fair trial proceedings

Case PSE-02

Palestine/Israel: The Palestinian Legislative Council and the Parliament of Israel are affiliated to the IPU

Victim: Member of the Palestinian Legislative Council (member of the majority)

Qualified complainant(s): Section I.(1).(b) of the Committee Procedure (Annex I)

Submission of complaint: April 2002

Recent IPU decision(s): October 2018

Recent IPU mission(s): - - -

Recent Committee hearing(s): Hearing with the head of the parliamentary group of Fatah at the 137th IPU Assembly (October 2017); hearing with the Palestinian complainants (October 2020)

Recent follow-up:
- Communication from the authorities: Letter from the head of the Knesset delegation to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (October 2020);
- Communication from the complainant: October 2020
- Communication addressed to the authorities: Letter addressed to the Speaker of the Knesset (September 2020)
- Communication addressed to the complainant: October 2020

A. Summary of the case

Mr. Marwan Barghouti, a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), was arrested on 15 April 2002 in Ramallah by the Israeli Defence Forces and transferred to a detention facility in Israel. He was charged with murder, attempted murder and involvement in terrorist organizations. His trial before the Tel Aviv District Court started on 14 August 2002 and ended on 6 June 2004, when the court sentenced him to five life sentences and two 20-year prison terms. The complainants have raised a series of legal objections to Mr. Barghouti's arrest and prosecution, alleging that he was ill-treated, especially at the start of his detention, and was denied access to legal counsel. The Committee appointed a legal expert and lawyer, Mr. Simon Foreman, to report on the trial. His report states that, “the numerous breaches of international law … make it impossible to conclude that Mr. Barghouti was given a fair trial”.

On 17 April 2017, Mr. Barghouti initiated a mass hunger strike, joined by more than 1,000 Palestinian inmates, to protest against the abusive and inhumane conditions in which Palestinian inmates were allegedly being held by the Israeli authorities. The “Freedom and dignity hunger strike” reportedly ended on 30 May 2017, as the Israeli Prison Service had agreed to grant some of the detainees’ requests. According to the information gathered during a hearing

[1] The delegation of Israel expressed its reservations regarding the decision.

with the Palestinian complainants held in October 2020, the strike had also been triggered by the 2017 decision of the Israeli authorities to reduce the number of monthly visits to one instead of two visits per month. The complainants stated that the Israeli authorities had promised to increase the number of monthly visits; however, this has yet to be done.

In their letter of 18 October 2020, the Israeli parliamentary authorities did not provide any information on Mr. Barghouti's current conditions of detention, including his visiting rights.

During the hearing held with the Palestinian complainants in October 2020, the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians gathered the information summarized below on the situation of Mr. Marwan Barghouti and other Palestinian inmates in Israeli prisons:

- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Mr. Barghouti has allegedly received only two visits from his spouse in 2020. According to the complainants, Mr. Barghouti is due to receive a third family visit in November 2020, which is facilitated by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) – the main focal point between the Israeli authorities and the inmates' families and the only international organization allowed to conduct visits to Israeli prisons. Family visits are also restricted to one relative instead of five, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and phone calls are allegedly prohibited. Prison guards may, however, allow an inmate to have a phone call in the event of emergencies. Nevertheless, there appears to be no consistency with respect to phone calls, which, according to the complainants, are arbitrarily granted or refused by prison guards;
- According to the complainants, visits are restricted to spouses and first-degree relatives (children, parents and siblings). During one visit, the Israeli authorities had promised Mr. Barghouti's family that he would be able to meet his eight-month-old granddaughter. The complainants alleged that, after passing three prison gates and being only one gate away from Mr. Barghouti, the authorities arbitrarily denied her access and refused to let her to be brought in;
- The complainants described the last visit granted to Mr. Barghouti, which was in August 2020. According to the complainants, before any visit could take place, the family had to receive confirmation from the ICRC and be granted a permit to enter Israel. In August 2020, those conditions were met and Ms. Fadwa Barghouti, his spouse, was able to visit him for 45 minutes. The visit took place in the visiting room, where they communicated by phone in front of a glass window separating them. The complainants added that preparing a visit was a time-consuming process; the round trip took almost eight hours, owing to the family's place of residence, the location of the prison, and the number of checkpoints to cross. The complainants stated that those conditions also applied to other inmates, and were more complicated for inmates from Gaza. According to the complainants, the Israeli authorities purposely detained inmates in prisons located far away from their place of residence, making it difficult for their families to visit;
- According to the complainants, detention conditions in Israeli prisons were dire. They said that prison buildings were obsolete, with poor sanitary conditions, and that they were infested with fleas and mosquitoes, while prison overcrowding was prevalent. The complainants alleged that inmates were not allowed to have a fan in times of high temperatures. The same applies during colder times, as prisons did not have central heating. Reportedly, prisoners were constantly being moved from one prison to another, or from prison to an investigation centre or to court, which meant that they spent several hours handcuffed inside a vehicle with aggressive and strict guards. The complainants also alleged that there were clothes shortages in prison and that inmates were allowed to have a new shirt only every three months. Inmates were required to first signal their needs to the prison guard, and wait for the guard to grant the request. Once the request was approved, inmates had to wait for a family visit before informing their relatives of their needs. The shirt could then be provided during the following family visit. The complainants also stated that detainees of all ages were held together, including children and young adults. Inmates suffering from serious diseases, including cancer or diabetes were allegedly denied appropriate medical care. The complainants also denounced Israel's overuse of administrative detention.

B Decision

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

1. *Takes note* of the Israeli parliamentary authorities' letter of 18 October 2020; *deeply regrets*, however, the lack of information about Mr. Barghouti's detention conditions;

2. *Takes notes with grave concern* that Mr. Barghouti was allegedly denied his visiting rights for three years for allegedly taking part in the 2017 mass hunger strike; *is also shocked* that, after three years without a single visit, Mr. Barghouti was only able to receive two visits from his spouse in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic; *firmly recalls* that Article 37 of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners stipulates that "prisoners shall be allowed … to communicate with their family and reputable friends at regular intervals, both by correspondence and by receiving visits"; *requests* the relevant Israeli authorities to give assurances that the upcoming visit scheduled for November 2020 will take place without hindrance;

3. *Strongly reaffirms* its long-standing position that Mr. Barghouti's arrest and transfer to Israeli territory was in violation of international law; *deplores* his continued detention for over 18 years following a trial that failed to meet the fair-trial standards that Israel is bound to respect as a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; *recalls* in this regard the compelling legal arguments put forward in Mr. Foreman's report; and consequently *renews its call* on the Israeli authorities to release Mr. Barghouti forthwith;

4. *Is deeply concerned* about the complainants' account of the detention conditions in Israeli prisons, including the prevailing crowded conditions and the alleged obsolete state of prison buildings; *is also worried* about the prohibition of phone calls and the arbitrary practice of prison guards in this regard; *urges* the Israeli authorities, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent visiting restrictions, to enable detainees to call their relatives;

5. *Reiterates its long-standing wish* to be granted permission to visit Mr. Barghouti; and *urges* the Israeli authorities to give serious consideration to this request;

6. *Questions* why the Israeli authorities decided to reduce the number of visits to one visit per month instead of the two monthly visits that were allowed until 2017; *wishes* to receive more information on the reasons pertaining to this decision; *also notes* that, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, family visits would be limited to one person instead of five; *deplores* the fact that Palestinian prisoners feel compelled to resort to hunger strikes to have their demands heard and acted upon; and *is eager* to receive updated information on Mr. Barghouti's current conditions of detention;

7. *Considers* that the many national and international reports denouncing the conditions of detention of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails should be of concern to the Knesset; *reaffirms* that the Knesset can, and should, exercise its oversight function of the Israeli prison service with regard to the treatment of Palestinian prisoners and thereby help ensure that all persons under the jurisdiction and effective control of Israel are afforded the full enjoyment of the rights enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; *wishes* to know if the Knesset and individual members are allowed to carry out impromptu prison visits and, if so, to receive information on the applicable legal framework;

8. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the competent authorities, the complainant and any third party likely to be in a position to supply relevant information;

9. *Requests* the Committee to continue examining this case and to report to it in due course.

Palestine/Israel

Decision adopted by consensus by the IPU Governing Council at its 206th session (Extraordinary virtual session, 3 November 2020) [1]

Palestinian supporters of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) take part in a protest outside the UNDP office calling for the release of Ahmad Sa'adat, leader PFLP, in Gaza city on 29 July 2015. MAJDI FATHI/NurPhoto/NurPhoto via AFP

PSE-05 – Ahmad Sa'adat

Alleged human rights violations

- ✓ Arbitrary arrest and detention
- ✓ Inhumane conditions of detention
- ✓ Lack of fair trial proceedings

A. Summary of the case

On 14 March 2006, Mr. Ahmad Sa'adat was abducted by the Israeli Defence Forces from Jericho Jail and transferred to Hadarim Prison in Israel, together with four other prisoners, after being accused by the Israeli authorities of involvement in the October 2001 murder of Mr. R. Zeevi, the Israeli Minister of Tourism. The Israeli authorities concluded one month later that Mr. Sa'adat had not been involved in the killing, but went on to charge the other four suspects. Subsequently, 19 other charges were brought against Mr. Sa'adat, all arising from his leadership of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), which Israel considers a terrorist organization. None of the charges allege direct involvement in crimes of violence. On 25 December 2008, Mr. Sa'adat was sentenced to 30 years in prison. While detained, Mr. Sa'adat reportedly did not receive the medical care he required, nor visits from his family. In March and June 2009, he was placed in solitary confinement, prompting him in June 2009 to go on a nine-day hunger strike. He remained in solitary confinement for three years, until May 2012.

In April 2017, Mr. Sa'adat took part in a mass hunger strike by Palestinian detainees to protest against their detention conditions in Israeli prisons. He was reportedly moved at that time to solitary confinement in Ohlikdar Prison. According to

Case PSE-05

Palestine/Israel: The Palestinian Legislative Council and the Parliament of Israel are affiliated to the IPU

Victim: Member of the Palestinian Legislative Council (member of the majority)

Qualified Complainant(s): Section I.(1).(b) of the Committee Procedure (Annex I)

Submission of complaint: July 2006

Recent IPU decision(s): October 2018

Recent IPU mission(s): - - -

Recent Committee hearing(s): Hearing with the Palestinian complainants (October 2020)

Recent follow-up:
- Communication from the authorities: Letters from the head of the Knesset delegation to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (October 2020)
- Communication from the complainant: October 2019
- Communication addressed to the authorities: Letter to the Speaker of the Knesset (September 2020)
- Communication addressed to the complainant: October 2020

[1] The delegation of Israel expressed its reservations regarding the decision.

the information gathered during a hearing with the Palestinian complainants in October 2020, the strike had also been triggered by the 2017 decision of the Israeli authorities to reduce the number of monthly visits to one instead of two visits per month. The complainants stated that the Israeli authorities had promised to increase the number of monthly visits; however, this has yet to be done.

In their letter of 18 October 2020, the parliamentary authorities did not provide any information on Mr. Sa'adat's current conditions of detention, including his visiting rights. The authorities suggested that the IPU should consider whether future correspondence relating to the case of Mr. Sa'adat was appropriate, given his involvement in terrorism-related crimes.

During the hearing held with the Palestinian complainants in October 2020, the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians gathered the following information on the situation of Palestinian inmates in Israeli prisons:

- The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is allegedly the main focal point between the Israeli authorities and the inmates' families, and the only international organization allowed to conduct visits to Israeli prisons. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, family visits are allegedly restricted to one relative instead of five, and phone calls are allegedly prohibited. Prison guards may, however, allow an inmate to have a phone call in the event of emergencies. Nevertheless, there appears to be no consistency with respect to phone calls, which, according to the complainants, are arbitrarily granted or refused by prison guards;

- According to the complainants, visits are restricted to spouses and first-degree relatives (children, parents and siblings). They said that, before any visit could take place, the family had to receive confirmation from the ICRC and be granted a permit to enter Israel. Visits lasted for 45 minutes and took place in the visiting room, where prisoners and their relatives communicated by phone in front of a glass window separating them. The complainants added that preparing for a visit was a time-consuming process; the round trip could take almost eight hours, owing to the family's place of residence, the location of the prison and the number of checkpoints to cross. The complainants stated that those conditions also applied to other inmates, and were more complicated for inmates from Gaza. According to the complainants, the Israeli authorities purposely detained inmates in prisons located far away from their place of residence, making it difficult for their families to visit;

- According to the complainants, detention conditions in Israeli prisons were dire. They said that prison buildings were obsolete, with poor sanitary conditions, and that they were infested with fleas and mosquitoes, while prison overcrowding was prevalent. The complainants alleged that inmates were not allowed to have a fan in times of high temperatures. The same applied during colder times, as prisons do not have central heating. Reportedly, prisoners were constantly being moved from one prison to another, or from prison to an investigation centre or to court, which meant that they spent several hours handcuffed inside a vehicle with aggressive and strict guards. The complainants also alleged that there were clothes shortages in prison and that inmates were allowed to have a new shirt only every three months. Inmates were required to first signal their needs to the prison guard, and wait for the guard to grant the request. Once the request was approved, inmates had to wait for a family visit before informing their relatives of their needs. The shirt could then be provided during the following family visit. The complainants also stated that detainees of all ages were held together, including children and young adults. Inmates suffering from serious diseases, including cancer or diabetes, were allegedly denied appropriate medical care. The complainants also denounced Israel's overuse of administrative detention.

B. Decision

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

1. *Takes note* of the Israeli parliamentary authorities' letter of 18 October 2020; *deeply regrets,* however, the lack of information about Mr. Sa'adat's detention conditions;

2. *Strongly reaffirms* its long-standing position that Mr. Sa'adat's abduction and transfer to Israel were related not to the original murder charge but rather to his political activities as PFLP General Secretary; *deplores* his continued detention for over 14 years as a result of a politically motivated trial; and consequently *calls again on* the Israeli authorities to release him without delay;

3. *Is deeply concerned* about the complainants' account of the detention conditions in Israeli prisons, including the prevailing overcrowding and the alleged obsolete state of prison buildings; *is also worried* about the prohibition of phone calls and the arbitrary practice of prison guards in this regard; and *urges* the Israeli authorities, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent visiting restrictions, to enable detainees to call their relatives;

4. *Reiterates its long-standing wish* to be granted permission to visit Mr. Sa'adat; and *urges* the Israeli authorities to give serious consideration to this request;

5. *Questions* why the Israeli authorities decided to reduce the number of visits to one visit per month, instead of the two monthly visits that were allowed until 2017; *wishes* to receive more information on the reasons pertaining to this decision; *also notes* that, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, family visits would be limited to one person instead of five; *deplores* the fact that Palestinian prisoners feel compelled to resort to hunger strikes to have their demands heard and acted upon; and *is eager* to receive updated information on Mr. Sa'adat's current conditions of detention;

6. *Stresses* that the many national and international reports denouncing the conditions of detention of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails should be of concern to the Knesset; *reaffirms* that the Knesset can, and should, exercise its oversight function of the Israeli prison service with regard to the treatment of Palestinian prisoners and thereby help ensure that all persons under the jurisdiction and effective control of Israel are afforded the full enjoyment of the rights enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; *wishes* to know if the Knesset and individual members are allowed to carry out impromptu prison visits and, if so, to receive information on the applicable legal framework;

7. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the competent authorities, the complainant and any third party likely to be in a position to supply relevant information;

8. *Requests* the Committee to continue examining this case and to report to it in due course.