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Arbitrary Detention: UN expert group concludes its 77th session and celebrates its 25th anniversary

GENEVA (30 November 2016) – The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has concluded its 77th regular session from 21 to 25 November in Geneva.

The Working Group has a mandate to investigate allegations of individuals being deprived of their liberty in an arbitrary way or inconsistently with international human rights standards, and to recommend remedies such as release from detention and compensation, when appropriate.

During the session, the Working Group adopted 18 opinions concerning 43 persons deprived of liberty. The adopted opinions will be transmitted to the Governments concerned and the sources. These opinions will also be published on the website of the Working Group.

The UN expert group also considered four requests for review* of previous opinions, submitted by the Arab Republic of Egypt, the State of Kuwait and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The Working Group concluded that the requests did not meet the threshold of a review as enshrined in paragraph 21 of its methods of work,** and that they were thus not admissible.

Furthermore, the Working Group conducted meetings with representatives of States and civil society organizations, and with experts to discuss issues related to its work.

On 28 November, the Working Group convened an event to celebrate its 25th anniversary.*** Current and former members of the expert group, victims of arbitrary detention, and representatives of Member States, international organisations and civil society discussed developments over the past 25 years, current challenges – including in the context of migration-related detention, as well as lessons learned and the way forward.

(*) The requests for review concern:

Opinion 2015/52 - Egypt (<http://www.undocs.org/A/HRC/WGAD/2015/52>);

Opinion 2016/7 - Egypt (<http://www.undocs.org/A/HRC/WGAD/2016/7>);

Opinion 2015/28 - Kuwait (<http://www.undocs.org/A/HRC/WGAD/2015/28>); and

Opinion 2015/54 - Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (<http://www.undocs.org/A/HRC/WGAD/2015/54>).

(**) See http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/33/66

(***) For more information about the 25th anniversary event, please log on to:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Detention/Pages/25thAnniversaryWGAD.aspx>

*The Working Group on Arbitrary Detention is comprised of five independent experts from various regions of the world: **Mr. Sètondji Roland Adjovi** (current Chair-Rapporteur, Benin), **Mr. José Antonio Guevara Bermúdez** (Vice-Chair on Communications, Mexico), **Ms. Leigh Toomey** (Vice-Chair on Follow-up, Australia), **Mr. Seong-Phil Hong** (Republic of Korea) and **Ms. Elina Steinerte** (Latvia).*

The Working Groups are part of what is known as the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council.

Special Procedures, the largest body of independent experts in the UN Human Rights system, is the general name of the Council's independent fact-finding and monitoring mechanisms that address either specific country situations or thematic issues in all parts of the world. Special Procedures' experts work on a voluntary basis; they are not UN staff and do not receive a salary for their work. They are independent from any government or organization and serve in their individual capacity. Learn more, log on to:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Detention/Pages/WGADIndex.aspx>

To access all opinions adopted by the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention since it was established in 1991, log on to:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Detention/Pages/OpinionsadoptedbytheWGAD.aspx>

*For more information and **media requests**, please contact Lucie Viersma (+41 22 928 9380 / lviersma@ohchr.org) or write to wgad@ohchr.org.*

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