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Updates from the UN

UN Human Rights Council adopts landmark resolution on sexual orientation and gender identity

The United Nations Human Rights Council, in its twenty-seventh session, has adopted a landmark resolution on human rights, sexual orientation and gender identity. Though the resolution endorses a limited mandate, the vote was highly divisive, with 25 in favour, 14 against and 7 abstentions. India was one of the seven nations that abstained from voting, effectively not voicing its opinion on the resolution.

The Resolution (A/HRC/RES/27/32) takes note of the rampant violence and discrimination against individuals globally based on their sexual orientation and gender identity, and calls for a report from the High Commissioner on Human Rights on practices to promote their human rights. This is only the second time in the history of the United Nations that discrimination against LGBTQ has been acknowledged as a human rights violation.

The text of the Resolution can be accessed [here](#).

Source: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=15109&LangID=E>

SRVAW calls for global treaty to eliminate violence against women

The UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women (SR VAW) has expressed the need for a legally binding global treaty to establish a protective, preventive framework to eliminate violence against women.

While addressing the General Assembly, the SR VAW reiterated that violence against women is a pervasive human rights issue and needs to be dealt with accordingly. The SR also pointed out that apart from violence against women, another issue that needs to be addressed is that economic measures being implemented in countries riddled with financial crises tend to affect women disproportionately, for instance poverty reduction measures, employment opportunities and benefit schemes.

Earlier this year the SR had submitted a [report](#) to the General Assembly highlighting developments in the UN regarding violence against women over the last twenty years.

Source: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=15211&LangID=E>

India gets re-elected to the UN Human Rights Council

India was re-elected as a member to the United Nations Human Rights Council for the 2015-17 term, garnering 162 votes, the highest number in the Asia-Pacific region. India has previously served 3 terms on the UNHRC since its inception in 2006, with its last term set to expire on 31 December 2014. Joining India at the table are Albania, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Botswana, the Congo, El Salvador, Ghana, Indonesia, Latvia, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Paraguay, Portugal and Qatar.

India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Asoke Mukerji, called the re-election an endorsement of India's Pledge to the UN on human rights, given ahead of the elections, which provides a wide definition of human rights. This includes a commitment to the empowerment of women, sustained and inclusive development, right to information and transparency, and the accessibility to information communication technologies.

Source: <http://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/Indias-Re-election-to-UNHRC-Is-Endorsement-of-Its-Position/2014/10/22/article2489441.ece>

OHCHR releases report on the right of persons to birth registration

The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) submitted its report on birth registration and the right of everyone to recognition everywhere as a person before the law to the Human Rights Council, pursuant to Council resolution 22/7. The report underlines its relevance as a human right in and of itself to achieve full personhood and citizenship, and its relationship to the realization of other human rights such as the right to health, to education etc. It states that non-registration of birth has life-long consequences upon an individual, and disproportionately so upon children, contributing to child labour, trafficking and early and forced marriages. The report further analyses the existing barriers to birth registration, and recommends evolving practices relevant to the specific social, cultural, legal and governance structures of a country.

The Report can be accessed [here](#).

Source: <http://www.wunrn.com>

International Developments

Asia

Philippines province passes anti-discriminatory ordinance to protect LGBT rights

In a historic move, Agusan del Norte has become the first province in Philippines to pass an anti-discrimination ordinance (ADO) that protects the rights of people irrespective of their sexual orientation and gender identity. The ordinance also prohibits discrimination on the basis of age, disability, ethnicity, health status, physical appearance, political affiliation, religion, and social status.

It recognizes as a policy “to value the dignity of every human person and guarantee full respect of human rights to promote equality and to effectively eliminate all forms of discrimination that violate and offend the guarantee of equal protection of human rights as enshrined in the Philippine Constitution and other existing laws, as well as in various international conventions and agreements to which the countries adheres and is signatory.” It mandates the creation of anti-discrimination councils within one year of the ordinance coming into effect.

Source: <http://www.hapihumanist.org/2014/08/agusan-del-norte-one-of-first-to-enact.html>

Kyrgyzstan's Parliament approves law banning 'gay propaganda', also proposes to restrict NGO freedoms

Following Russia's lead, lawmakers in Kyrgyzstan have approved a draft law banning 'gay propaganda supporting same-sex relations' in its first reading. The draft law allows police to take

action against anyone 'forming a positive attitude to untraditional sexual relations' among minors or in mass media. It also bans creation of groups that defend the rights of sexual minorities. The proposed bill has to be passed in three readings and then be signed by the president to become a law. The legislation contradicts numerous human rights provisions in Kyrgyzstan's constitution and threatens the fundamental rights of all people.

Also, drawing from Russia's draconian laws, the Kyrgyzstan government is considering a law which seeks to target foreign funded NGOs. It will make it mandatory for civil society groups to register, putting in place stringent oversight and control, through requirements of not just annual audit, reporting, but also allows the government to seek documents on operation of NGOs, send representatives to NGO events, and test them for compliance with the statutes. The proposed law provides for an excessively broad definition of "political activities," that includes participation (including through funding) in "organizing and conducting political actions that have the objective of influencing decision-making of public authorities and are aimed at changing public policies pursued by these authorities" or "in shaping public opinion for the same purposes".

Source: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/10/13/us-rights-kyrgyzstan-gay-idUSKCN0I20HR20141013>
<http://www.article19.org/resources.php/resource/37244/en/kyrgyzstan:-russia-style-ngo-law-poses-a-threat-to-human-rights-and-democratization>

Bangladesh considers lowering age of marriage of girls to 16 years

The Bangladesh government is considering lowering the age of marriage to 16 years for girls. The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs has said that this decision was a step towards the government's goal to reduce child marriage rate in the country by 2021. The current legal age for marriage is 21 for boys and 18 for girls, established by the National Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929.

Bangladesh is one of the nations that have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which prohibits child marriage, stipulating 18 as the minimum age, thereby also complying with the Convention on the Rights of the Child that Bangladesh has ratified.

Source: <http://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/2014/oct/01/activists-concerned-over-proposal-lower-age-limit-marriage>

Singapore Supreme Court dismisses petition seeking de-criminalization of homosexuality

The Supreme Court in Singapore rejected two separate Constitutional challenges to Section 377A of the Penal Code, which criminalises sexual intimacy between men, maintaining that the law does not contravene Singapore's Constitution. The court held that Section 377A did not violate Article 9 as the phrase "life and liberty" referred only to the personal liberty of a person from unlawful incarceration, not their right of privacy and personal autonomy.

The court also ruled that Section 377A fell outside the scope of Article 12, which forbids discrimination of citizens on grounds of religion, race and place of birth, but with no mention of "gender", "sex" and "sexual orientation", which related to Section 377A.

In dismissing their challenges, the court emphasised that the finding would not impact the freedom of individuals and groups to practise their values within the boundaries of the law. This freedom, however, “cannot ... extend to an insistence by a particular group or individual that its/his values be imposed on other groups or other individuals”.

Singapore’s law against homosexual conduct is contrary to the rights to non-discrimination, privacy, and freedom of expression recognized by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, whose provisions are considered reflective of customary international law. This is a major setback for human rights in Singapore as the ruling undermines basic rights to privacy, equality, and non-discrimination.

Source: <http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/singapore/supreme-court-rejects/1441378.html>
<http://www.hrw.org/node/130278>

You can access the judgement [here](#)

Bangladesh High Court issues show cause notice to Government on discriminatory marriage contract forms

The Bangladeshi High Court has issued a show cause notice to several government authorities to explain why an entry in the official marriage contract forms (Kabin nama) should not be declared to be unlawful for discriminating against women on grounds of sex in violation of the Constitution of Bangladesh.

The forms, in their current format require only the brides to make a statement about her marital status, specifically stating whether she is a virgin/divorced/widowed.

The notice was issued by the Court pursuant to a writ petition filed by the Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST), Naripokkho, and Bangladesh Mahila Parishad. In the petition it was submitted that the entry in the form was violative of Articles 27, 28, 31 and 32 of the Bangladesh Constitution

Source: <http://thinklegalbangladesh.com/home/news.php>
<http://us6.campaign-archive1.com/?u=835a0e57f7ac5f9d6fd42b18c&id=c95d2532a3&e=6728b8ff9c>

Human Rights Committee reviews Sri Lanka’s fifth periodic report on ICCPR

The Human Rights Committee at the OHCHR has considered and reviewed Sri Lanka’s fifth periodic [report](#) under Article 40 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) of which Sri Lanka is a ratified party.

In its concluding observations released pursuant to the review, the Committee has, while lauding the Sri Lankan government for its positive steps, also identified areas of concern as well, including the 18th Amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution empowering the president to dismiss or appoint members of the judiciary. The Committee also recommended that the government adopt a comprehensive approach to prevent and address violence against women in all its forms and manifestations.

Earlier, while responding to a query by the Committee, the Sri Lankan government had responded that Article 12 of the Constitution protected persons from stigmatization and non discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

The Sri Lankan status report, along with the concluding observations and the government's list of replies can be accessed [here](#).

Beyond Asia

Mexican state of Coahuila legalises same sex marriages

In a welcome move, Coahuila became Mexico's first state to give legislative approval to same-sex marriages. The state, which shares its border with Texas, approved more than 40 changes in its Civil Code. The Civil Code, which defined marriage as a 'union between a man and a woman for the purpose of procreation', has now been amended to 'a union between two people with the possibility of procreation or adoption',

Though same-sex civil unions were permitted in Coahuila, they were not allowed to marry. The amendments also give same sex people the right to have children through adoption or biological means. Mexico City is the only other jurisdiction in the country that has explicitly legalized same-sex marriage. A landmark ruling by Mexico's Supreme Court in 2012 declared state bans on same-sex marriage violated the federal constitution's guarantee of civil rights.

Source: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-29028305>
<http://www.ibtimes.com/mexican-state-legislature-becomes-first-approve-gay-marriage-1676064>

Swedish Administrative Court holds mental health diagnosis not mandatory to obtain legal gender recognition

A Swedish Administrative Court in a groundbreaking decision held that requiring a mental health diagnosis cannot be mandatory for obtaining legal gender recognition as the Gender Recognition Act does not have such a requirement. The decision came after the Council of the National Board of Health and Welfare, in charge of certain legal, social and medical issues rejected the application of the petitioner to be recognised as a woman. The Administrative Court, while considering the requirements as provided under the Gender Recognition Act, observed that the mental health diagnosis is solely intended to provide support and guidance.

The decision can be accessed [here](#).

Gambia introduces 'aggravated homosexuality' into its penal code

Gambia's national assembly has passed a bill to introduce the crime of 'aggravated homosexuality' into its criminal code and make it punishable by life imprisonment. If the legislation becomes law, a person would be charged with the offense of 'aggravated homosexuality' if he or she 'commits an act of homosexuality' under certain circumstances such as if the 'offender' is HIV+ or a recidivist, or the 'victim' is under the age of 18.

Though homosexuality in itself has been an offence under the Gambian Criminal Code, if amendment is approved in its current form, it will make Gambia the only jurisdiction in Africa whose laws include the offence of 'aggravated homosexuality'. Although earlier this year Uganda adopted an anti-homosexuality law that included a similar provision, the law was recently invalidated by the country's Constitutional Court on a technicality.

Source: http://www.loc.gov/lawweb/servlet/lloc_news?disp3_1205404120_text
<http://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFKBN0H50HS20140910>

Estonia legalises same sex partnership

In a historic move, Estonia became the first nation from the erstwhile Soviet Union to legalise same sex partnerships. The Partnership Act, which was approved by the lawmakers with an astounding majority, recognises civil unions of all couples regardless of gender. The law gives same sex couples the same rights as heterosexual couples which includes financial, social and health benefits provided by the government and legal protection for children. Though the law does not give adoption rights to same sex couples, it does allow one partner to adopt the biological child of the other partner.

Source: <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/estonia-approves-sex-partnerships-26065454>
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-29559012>
<http://humanrights.ee/en/2014/10/estonia-became-the-first-ex-soviet-country-to-legalize-same-sex-partnerships/>

Kenyan High Court orders KNEC to recognise transgendered person's changed name on high school certificate

In a progressive move, the Kenyan High Court ordered the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) to change the name on the high school certificate of a transsexual person who had undergone a sex change operation.

The High Court decision came after the petitioner, a prominent trans activist in Kenya sued KNEC for refusing to change her name and for deleting the male gender mark despite the fact that her new identity was published by Kenya's gazette. The High Court observed that not recognising the petitioner with her identified gender amounted to a violation of her human rights. In a country like Kenya, where the LGBTI community cannot access work and education, this decision of the high court comes as a significant victory.

Source: <http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Kenyan-Transgender-Person-Wins-Case-at-Supreme-Court-20141007-0039.html>
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-29519881>

Palau revises penal code to decriminalise homosexuality

The Pacific Republic of Palau, with a revision in its penal code has decriminalised homosexuality. Previously, a sexual relationship between men was punishable in Palau with up to 10 years imprisonment. Sexual relationship between women, however, was not a crime.

It is interesting to note that in 2011, at its Universal Periodic Review (UPR) at the UN Human Rights Council, Palau accepted the recommendations to repeal all provisions in domestic legislation criminalising consensual sexual activity between same sex adults and to combat discrimination against LGBT people through political, legislative and administrative measures.

Source: <http://www.pinknews.co.uk/2014/10/15/palau-gay-sex-decriminalised-in-penal-code-revision/>
<http://www.humandignitytrust.org/pages/NEWS/News?NewsArticleID=300>

Judgments/ Orders

Supreme Court observes that domestic violence complaint holds even after marriage is dissolved

In a significant judicial observation in the case of *Juveria Abdul Majid Patni v. Atif Iqbal Mansoori*, the Supreme Court has clarified that a complaint under Section 12 of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA) is maintainable against the husband even after divorce, where in case the incident of domestic violence occurred during the subsistence of the domestic relationship.

In this case, the wife pleaded that she had obtained divorce through an ex-parte *khula* (a form of marriage dissolution under Islamic law initiated by the wife) from a Mufti. The husband challenged the divorce and sought restitution of conjugal rights. Simultaneously, proceedings under Section 498-A, IPC were also pending against the husband. The two issues before the Court were whether the Appellant was still the wife of the Respondent, and if not, whether an application under Section 12 of the PWDVA was nevertheless maintainable.

The Supreme Court held the divorce to be invalid for failing to abide by procedural formalities. However, it also observed that even if the marriage has come to an end, the Appellant is entitled to relief under the PWDVA for instances of domestic violence during the marriage. The Court based this observation on a cumulative reading of Sections 2(a), (f) and (s), and Sections 20, 23 and 26 of the PWDVA. None of these provisions alluded to any requirement of the domestic relationship subsisting at the time of filing the complaint, and in fact, expressly adverted to relationships that have existed in the past, and include previous instances of violence.

Such a reading fulfils the mandate of Section 26, PWDVA, which permits an aggrieved person to seek relief under the PWDVA in any other legal proceedings, including those under Section 498-A, IPC, even after the dissolution of marriage

You can read the whole judgement [here](#).

Source: <http://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/domestic-violence-plaint-holds-even-if-marriage-is-dissolved-sc/>

Supreme Court orders implementation of Section 436 A of the CrPC for release of undertrial prisoners

While hearing a writ petition (*Bhim Singh v. UoI*), the Supreme Court has ordered the implementation of Section 436 A of the CrPC which sets a ceiling on the maximum period for which an undertrial prisoner can be detained. Under this provision, an undertrial prisoner who has undergone up to half the maximum period specified for the offence committed by him has to be released on personal bond with or without sureties. The provision was introduced by an amendment in 2005 with a view to reduce over population of prisons and expedite criminal justice in the country.

In its order the Court has directed jurisdictional magistrates, Chief Judicial Magistrates and Sessions Judges to hold one sitting a week for a period of two months in each of the prisons within their jurisdiction, identify undertrial prisoners who have been incarcerated for up to half their maximum

punishment and pass appropriate orders for their release in compliance with Section 436 A of the CrPC.

The Apex Court's order brings hope to thousands of indigent undertrial prisoners languishing in prisons without means to provide surety for their bail. However, it is also germane to note that the Court, through its order is only putting in effect a legal provision which was in any case meant to be implemented by the government.

You can read the order [here](#).

Source:<http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-advocate-bhim-singh-welcomes-supreme-court-verdict-on-release-of-undertrials-2016822>

Op-Ed: <http://www.indiaresists.com/caged-justice-supreme-courts-latest-order-on-undertrials-and-its-impact-in-chhattisgarh/>

Supreme Court gives clarification on maintenance proceedings under Section 125 CrPC

In a recently delivered judgment in the case of Sunita Kachawa and Ors v. Anil Kachawa, the Supreme Court has clarified that maintenance proceedings under Section 125 of the CrPC are summary in nature, and the only pre condition for maintenance to be provided is that the 'wife must positively aver and prove that she is unable to maintain herself, and the husband has sufficient means to maintain her'.

The Supreme Court has made it clear that for the purpose of granting maintenance it is not necessary for the court to 'examine the matrimonial dispute in minute details and ascertain as to who was in the wrong'. This clarification comes as a relief for women embroiled in lengthy matrimonial disputes and without means to maintain themselves, as it specifies the relevant issues for courts to consider in matters of granting maintenance.

You can read the entire judgment [here](#).

District court in Delhi holds that marrying the victim doesn't relieve rape accused of criminal liability

An Additional Sessions Judge in a Delhi District Court has held that merely because a rape accused married the prosecutrix subsequent to the act of rape does not mean that the alleged offence is nullified. While convicting the accused of raping the prosecutrix, the Court also observed that in any case the offence of rape is not compoundable, and the rape victim may have married the accused to avoid the social stigma of being a rape victim.

Earlier in 2013, the Supreme Court had in the case of [Shimbhu & Anr. v. State of Haryana](#) directed trial courts to not show leniency in sentencing accused convicted of rape merely because they had married the victim.

You can read the trial court judgement [here](#).

Source:<http://indianexpress.com/article/cities/delhi/marriage-no-excuse-delhi-court-convicts-man-of-raping-woman-he-later-wed/>

Delhi High Court issues directions for trial courts for cases with vulnerable witnesses

The Delhi High Court has, in a significant judgment, issued directions to trial courts for conducting trials of cases involving grave offences punishable with more than seven years imprisonment.

While commuting the death sentence awarded by the trial court to a sentence of 8 years RI in the case of State vs Surender@Sonu Punabi, the High Court observed that the prosecution and the trial court had failed to ensure that the vulnerable prosecution witnesses were examined within a proper timeframe and provided with personal safety and security, leading to their resiling from their earlier statements.

The directions to the trial courts mandate that the examination of public witnesses be concluded within 3 months of commencement of witness examination, and if the same is not possible then the reasons be recorded in the order. The trial court judges are also directed to ensure that if required, the vulnerable witnesses be provided with police protection.

The directions of the High Court assume further significance in light of recent initiatives of the judiciary to establish 'witness friendly' complexes, or Vulnerable Witness Deposition Complexes in Karkardooma and Saket District Courts for vulnerable witnesses in cases against children, or sexual violence against women.

You can read the judgment [here](#)

News

Law Commission recommends reform of the Succession Act for parity to Christian women

The Law Commission of India in its 247th report has suggested amending certain sections of the Indian Succession Act of 1925 as they discriminate against Christian women. The report focuses on Sections 41 to 48 of the Act, and emphasizes that the Act incorporates 'a preferential approach towards men and is unfair and unjust towards Christian women'. The aforementioned sections in effect stipulate that only when neither the father, sibling or children of the deceased intestate are living that the property shall go to the mother of the deceased. Such a position puts the mother of the deceased on a lower pedestal than the father, and has been deemed by the Law Commission to be unfair and preferential towards men.

You can read the full report [here](#).

Source: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Law-panel-wants-Christian-women-to-get-rights-over-dead-childrens-property/articleshow/42476794.cms>

Transgender children to have reserved admission in Delhi schools

The Directorate of Education of the Delhi Government has, by a notification under the Right To Education Act of 2009, included transgender children within the definition of 'child belonging to disadvantaged group' under the Act. With this move, transgender children in Delhi will now be entitled to admission under the 25% quota available for economically weaker section and disadvantaged students.

This welcome and progressive move follows the recent move of the University of Delhi to include 'third gender' as a category in the application forms for its MA program. These slow but refreshing institutional changes come in the wake of the landmark Supreme Court judgment in [NALSA v. UoI](#), guaranteeing equal rights protection under the law to transgendered persons, and also ascribing

'socially and economically backward' status to them. It is also important that concomitant mechanisms are developed within these educational institutions to both protect transgendered students from harassment of all kinds, as well as bring about changes in attitudes of others in the way they think about people from the trans community.

Source: <http://indianexpress.com/article/cities/delhi/reserved-seats-for-transgender-children-in-schools/>

Government asks for clarification on Supreme Court judgment on transgender rights

The government has asked for clarification on the Supreme Court judgment in NALSA v. UoI granting protection of the rights of transgendered persons under Part III of the Constitution. Through the petition seeking clarification, the government has sought to point out that the term 'eunuch' is not an equivalent of transgender or a variant. It also seeks to include trans men and, trans women and a number of other socio cultural categories with or without surgical changes under 'third gender'.

However, the government also sought to clarify that the categorization of third gender under OBC is a determination that the National Commission for Backward Classes would have to make. This raises the possibility of endlessly delaying the categorization directed by the Supreme Court.

You can read the government petition for clarification [here](#).

Op-Ed: <http://orinam.net/govt-india-asks-supreme-court-clarifymodify-nalsa-judgement/>

Saket District Court in Delhi sets up Vulnerable Witness Deposition Complex

The District Court in Saket has established a vulnerable witness deposition complex for child witnesses, victims of rape and domestic violence and other vulnerable witnesses. The witness friendly complex is the second such complex in Delhi's district courts, the first one having been established in Karkardooma Court.

In the vulnerable witness complex, the witness is to be escorted to the court by a facilitator, through a separate entry away from the public glare. The complex is part of an initiative of the judiciary to shield vulnerable witnesses from the trauma of deposing in the presence of the accused. Though such infrastructural changes are significant and must be introduced in all districts in Delhi and indeed, across the country, they provide only partial protection. In cases of sexual violence, the witness, especially the victim is intimidated and pressurised by her family, community, the accused and his associates, and sometimes even the police, compelling them to turn hostile or depose falsely. While shielding the witness during deposition is a necessary step forward, it must be accompanied by a robust witness protection programme to ensure that the shielding is not limited to the period and space of deposition during trial.

Source: <http://www.legallyindia.com/201409175065/Bar-Bench-Litigation/saket-dc-starts-vulnerable-witness-deposition-complex-to-make-hostile-witnesses-friendly>

RESOURCES

‘Violence against Women and Girls: Lessons from South Asia’-World Bank

This report examines the prevalence and the factors associated with various types of violence against women and girls in South Asia. It documents the dynamics of multiple forms of violence throughout their lives, from early childhood to old age. Policies and programs that address violence against women and girls are also analyzed in order to highlight key actors and promising interventions. The report identifies critical gaps in research, program evaluations, and interventions in order to provide strategic recommendations for policy makers, civil society, and other stakeholders working to mitigate violence against women in South Asia.

The report can be accessed [here](#)

Human Rights Council Resolution Portal: Universal Rights Group

The Universal Rights Group, an independent think-tank dedicated to analysing global human rights policy, has launched a Human Rights Council Resolution Portal which aims to support the international human rights system by making the work and output of the Human Rights Council more accessible and transparent, thereby strengthening universality and facilitating follow-up. It offers a comprehensive, intuitive and easily accessible database of every resolution, decision and presidential statement adopted by the Council since its creation in 2006.

The portal can be accessed [here](#).

‘Rabat Plan of Action- Balancing Free Speech & Incitement of Discrimination and Hatred’ : OHCHR

A series of expert workshops on incitement to national, racial or religious hatred, as reflected in international human rights law were organised by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in various parts of the world. It aimed to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the implementation of legislation, jurisprudence and policies regarding advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence at the national and regional levels, while encouraging full respect for freedom of expression. To produce a comparative analysis of the findings of the workshops the Rabat Plan of Action has been prepared that reflects the conclusions and recommendations and identifies possible actions at all levels.

The document can be accessed [here](#).

‘On their Watch- Mass Violence and State Apathy in India- Examining the Record’: Ed. Surabhi Chopra and Prita Jha

This book surveys, analyses and critiques the state and its role in cases of sectarian violence. It examines closely four historic and horrendous cases of mass sectarian violence- the Nellie riots in Assam in 1983, the Delhi anti- Sikh riots in 1984, the Bhagalpur riots of 1989 and the Gujarat riots of 2002. The book uses the Right to Information Act as an interrogative and probative tool to understand the complicit and apathetic nature of the state and its institutions in cases of sectarian violence, and is based on over 800 RTI applications.

You can buy the book [here](#).

‘Gender Equality and Sustainable Development’: UN Women

The UN Women has released a flagship report charting the rationale and relevance of the politics of gender equality within the framework of sustainable development. The study asserts that no comprehensive sustainable development pathway can be achieved without an explicit commitment to gender equality and women’s empowerment. It provides an in depth analysis of sustainable development issues and challenges through the lens of gender.

The report can be accessed [here](#).