Analysis - Special Procedures: General Assembly reporting cuts
Updated October 2026

Previous positions:
Letter (March 2026)
Guiding questions (June 2026)

Introduction

In December 2024, the General Assembly adopted resolution 79/192 on the working methods of the Third Committee, with the objective of 'achiev[ing] a manageable workload for the Committee and ensur[ing] the high quality of its deliberations'. The document *Implementation of General Assembly Resolution 79/192 – Elements for a Roadmap*, requested in operative paragraph 3 of the resolution, was presented and discussed, **but the General Assembly never formally adopted it**.

Nevertheless, the Roadmap discussions established a set of guiding principles aimed at progressively reducing the number of mandates reporting to each session of the General Assembly's Third Committee by an indicative 3 to 5 mandates per year, until the Committee's 84th session. **This would amount to a total reduction of approximately 9 to 15 reports over the course of the 81st, 82nd, and 83rd sessions of the General Assembly.**[1]

At the same time, successive efficiency initiatives, the UN's ongoing budgetary constraints, and the UN80 reform process have further prompted Member States to advance proposals to reduce the reporting periodicity of Special Procedures to the General Assembly.

As highlighted by civil society organisations, without a strategic approach that includes meaningful consultation with relevant actors and a case-by-case assessment that highlights the extraordinary nature of these measures, these developments risk diminishing the visibility of key human rights issues in New York, widening the institutional gap between the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council, and normalising this practice over the long term. **Reductions in reporting are accompanied by corresponding reductions in resources allocated from the Regular Budget to**

[1] It is important to note here that both the resolution and the Roadmap reference all Human Rights Council's reporting mandates, not only Special Procedures.

Special Procedures, which are exacerbated by reductions in extrabudgetary contributions to Special Procedures mandates.

The analysis below provides an overview of reductions in reporting implemented so far within the timeframe proposed by the Roadmap: General Assembly sessions 81 to 83 (2026–2028), and it considers the reductions adopted by the Council between its 60th session in September 2025 and the 63rd session of the Council (HRC63), in September 2026. Notably, **33 mandates were renewed over HRC60-63.** With a three-year renewal cycle, that is about 72% of all 46 mandates within one year, and 25 within HRC61-63 alone.

Main findings

1. **The scale of reductions has already exceeded what was contemplated under the Roadmap.** Resolutions adopted at HRC60-63 will result in 19 fewer reports to GA81-83, exceeding the Roadmap's indicative cumulative range of 9-15 reports. The highest number of reductions will affect the General Assembly's 82nd session (GA82) in 2027, with 9 fewer reports to be presented that session. There have been 5 fewer reports during GA81 (2026), and there will be 5 fewer reports during GA83 (2028)[2].
2. **What began as a workload-management exercise risks becoming a structural change to Special Procedures reporting.** Several resolutions do not merely omit reporting for a specified session but establish biennial reporting, potentially halving GA reporting over successive mandate renewals. There's no uniform language around reporting reductions. Some resolutions state the specific sessions where mandate holders are meant to report to the GA, and others just vaguely state they should be reporting biennially to the General Assembly, only to be defined by the programme budget implications (PBI) arising from the resolution.
3. **Safeguards remain inconsistent.** Some resolutions preserve alternative opportunities for GA engagement or redirect savings to substantive mandate activities, while others contain no equivalent protection.
4. **Between the 60th and 63rd sessions of the Human Rights Council (HRC60–HRC63), the reporting periodicity of a significant number of Special Procedures[3] mandates was reduced.** During HRC61, 50% of the renewed mandates (5 of 10) experienced reductions in reporting periodicity. Similarly, during HRC62, 50% of the mandates that were up for renewal (4 of 8) had their reporting obligations reduced as well. During HRC63, 29% of mandates renewed suffered reductions in reporting periodicity (2 of 7).
5. **States in the Western Europe and Others Group (WEOG) have led this reporting reduction process thus far**, followed by cross-regional groups, the majority of which include one or more WEOG members. During HRC63, the African Group led the 2 initiatives to reduce reporting.

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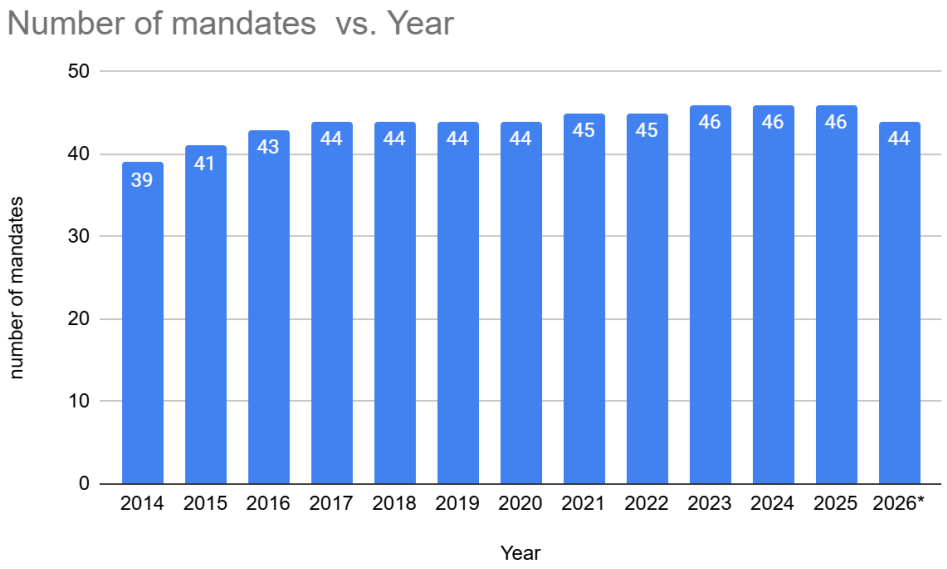
[2] For the purpose of this analysis, the merger or termination of a mandate is counted as one fewer report for each of the General Assembly sessions under consideration, in accordance with the relevant PBI.

[3] This analysis centres thematic Special Procedures reports who have been affected by reductions in periodicity of reporting, and does not include other Human Rights Council mechanisms that also present reports to the General Assembly.

6. **Close to a third of thematic Special Procedures mandates** with reporting obligations to the General Assembly have already been affected by the current initiatives to reduce reporting.

I. Overview of Special Procedures Reporting to the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council since 2014.

Mandate creation throughout the years



- There were 39 thematic mandates in 2014 and 46 thematic mandates in 2025. As of August 2026, there are 44 mandates (with the termination of the Special Rapporteur on Leprosy and the merging of the mandates on trafficking and slavery in 2025), around a **13% increase** in 12 years.[4]

New mandates, merged mandates and discontinued mandates since 2014: Nine new thematic mandates were established over the past 12 years. During the same period, one mandate was terminated, and two thematic mandates were merged.

2014

- **New:** Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities
- **New:** Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights

2015

[4] According to the Special Procedures annual reports presented to the HRC.

- **New:** Independent Expert on the enjoyment of human rights by persons with albinism
- **New:** Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy

2016

- **New:** Special Rapporteur on the right to development
- **New:** Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity

2017

- **New:** Special Rapporteur on the elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy (Hansen's disease) and their family members (see below, terminated in 2026).

2021

- **New:** Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change

2023

- **New:** Working Group on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas

2025

- **Merger:** Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery and trafficking in persons (merged mandate)

2026

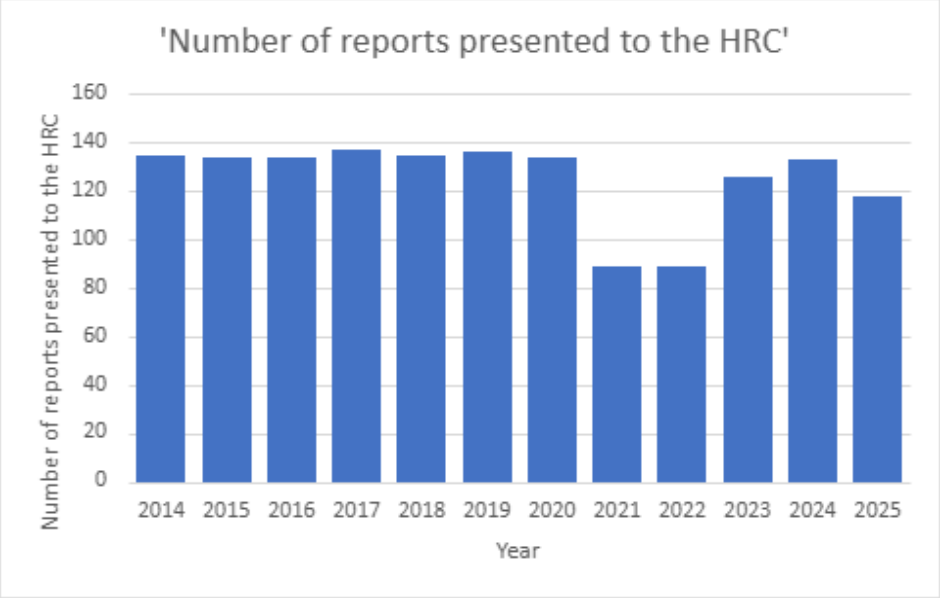
- **Termination:** Special Rapporteur on the elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy (Hansen's disease) and their family members terminated.

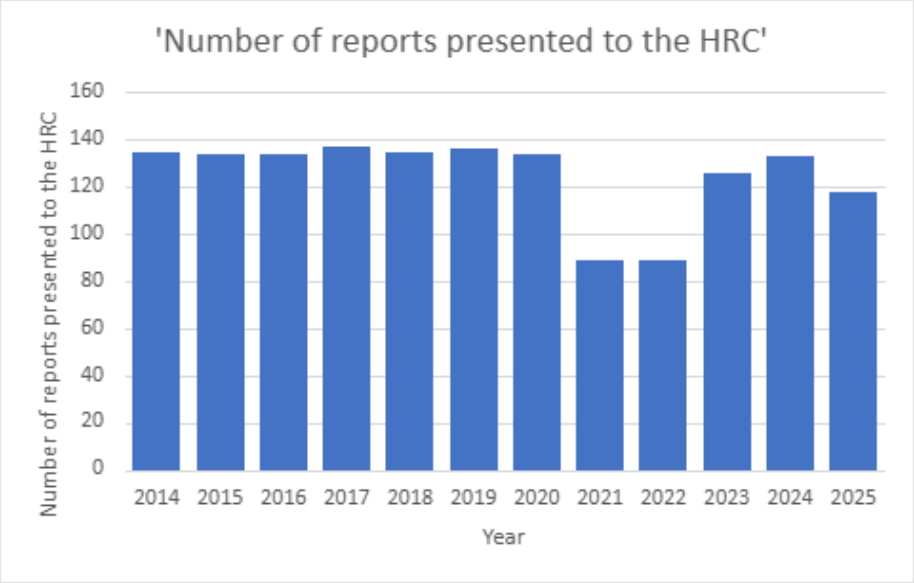
II. Overview of thematic reporting to the GA and the HRC since 2014.

There has been a 36% increase in thematic reporting to the General Assembly, rising from 36 reports in 2014 to 49 reports in 2025. This increase reflects the growth in the number of mandates, as well as the fact that individual mandates may be required to present more than one report to the General Assembly in a given year. It is important to highlight that the number of reports presented therefore varies depending on the reporting requirements of each mandate. For example, the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance presents both a thematic report and a report on the glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

Additionally, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention is not required to report to the General Assembly, and the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances and the Working Group on Discrimination against Women and Girls also only present orally to the Assembly, without written reports. In addition, country visit reports are not presented to the General Assembly, which explains the difference between the number of reports presented to the General Assembly and those presented to the Human Rights Council.

Year	Number of reports presented to the Human Rights Council	Number of reports presented to the General Assembly
2014	135	36
2015	134	38
2016	134	40
2017	137	39
2018	135	46
2019	136	46
2020	134	48
2021	89	50
2022	89	46
2023	126	48
2024	133	48
2025	118	49





These figures were drawn from the Special Procedures annual reports, which provide an overview of the activities of all mandate holders.

III. Mandates affected by the reductions

The lists below identify all mandate renewals. The first list displays the mandates whose reporting requirements have been reduced to date. The second list displays the mandates that have maintained the original reporting obligations to the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council [5].

Out of the 25 mandates renewed specifically during HRC61, HRC62 and HRC63, 13 were affected by reductions in their reporting obligations**. This means that 52% of the mandates renewed between HRC61 and HRC63 experienced reporting cuts.**

In addition, **at HRC60 in September 2025**, as an efficiency measure, the Council decided to reduce the periodicity of the reporting of the Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation. However, in this instance, the reduction in reporting requirements was aligned with the participation of the mandate holder in the UN Water Conference, resulting in no reports to the General Assembly in 2026 and 2028 (when the Conference takes place), and reports being submitted in 2025 and 2027. During the same session, the Council also merged the mandates of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery and the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons into a single mandate entitled *Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery and trafficking in person*s. For this analysis, this merger is treated as one fewer report for each of the three relevant General Assembly sessions, as reflected in the corresponding programme budget implications (PBI).

[5] The current lists includes all mandates affected by reductions, including mandates that have been merged and terminated, as well as mandates whose reporting obligations remain unchanged. For this analysis, the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on leprosy, which was discontinued in June 2026, is also treated as a reduction in reporting, equivalent to one fewer report for each of the next three General Assembly sessions taking place in the next three years.

A. Mandates whose reporting obligations have been reduced.

Title / Mandate	Renewal HRC Session	GA session cut	Focus	Core Group	Regional Group
Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery and trafficking in persons (merger)	HRC60	GA81, GA82, GA83	RACS	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Argentina, Australia, Germany, Jordan, Philippines	Cross-regional
Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation	HRC60	GA81, GA83	DESC	Germany, Spain	WEOG
Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression	HRC61	GA81	RACS	Canada, Netherlands	WEOG
Special Rapporteur on adequate housing	HRC61	GA82	DESC	Brazil, Germany, Finland, Namibia	Cross-regional
Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders	HRC61	GA82	RACS	Norway	WEOG
Special Rapporteur on the sale, sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children	HRC61	GA82	END	Cyprus (on behalf of the European Union), Uruguay (on behalf of GRULAC, except Argentina)	Cross-regional
Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment	HRC61	GA81, GA83	RACS	Denmark	WEOG
Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities	HRC62	GA82	END	Mexico, New Zealand	Cross-regional
Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions	HRC62	GA83	RACS	Sweden, Finland	WEOG
Special Rapporteur on the elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy (termination)	*HRC62*	GA81, GA82, GA83	DESC	Japan, Brazil, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Fiji, India, Kyrgyzstan, Morocco	Cross-regional
Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights	HRC62	GA82	DESC	France, Albania, Belgium, Chile, Morocco, Peru, Philippines, Romania	Cross-regional
Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent	HRC63	GA82	END	African Group	African Group
Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes	HRC63	GA82	DESC	African Group	African Group

B. Mandates that have not suffered reductions in periodicity of reporting.

Mandate	Renewal session	Reporting cuts	Focus of the resolution	Core Group
Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons	HRC60	no	END	Argentina, Brazil, Gambia, Philippines, Slovenia
Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health	HRC60	no	DESC	Brazil
Working Group on Arbitrary Detention	HRC60	no	RACS	France
Special Rapporteur on the right to development	HRC60	no	DESC	Uganda (on behalf of Movement of Non-Aligned Countries)
Working Group on the use of mercenaries	HRC60	no	RACS	Cuba
Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples	HRC60	no	END	Mexico, Guatemala
Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States	HRC61	no	DESC	Cuba
Special Rapporteur on minority issues	HRC61	no	END	Austria, Slovenia
Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance	HRC61	no	END	Kenya (African Group)
Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants	HRC61	no	RACS	Mexico
Special Rapporteur on the right to food	HRC61	no	DESC	Cuba
Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations	HRC62	no	RACS	Argentina
Special Rapporteur on the right to education	HRC62	no	DESC	Portugal
Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers	HRC62	no	RACS	Hungary, Australia, Botswana, Maldives, Mexico, Thailand
Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity	HRC62	no	DESC	Cuba
Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances	HRC63	no	RACS	France, Argentina, Japan, Morocco
Independent expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order	HRC63	no	RACS	Cuba
Working Group on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas	HRC63	no	DESC	Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Cuba, Gambia, Indonesia, Luxembourg, South Africa
Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation & guarantees of non-recurrence	HRC63	no	RACS	Switzerland, Argentina, Morocco
Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights	HRC63	no	DESC	Uganda (on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries)

As the numbers show, for GA81(2026), there were 5 fewer reports; for GA82 (2027), there will be 9 fewer reports; and for GA83 (2028), also 5 fewer reports, which makes a global total of 19 reports.

GA session	**Number of reports cut during HRC60**	**Number of reports cut during HRC61**	**Number of reports cut during HRC62**	**Number of reports cut during HRC63**	**Total**
GA81 (2026)	2	2	1	0	5
GA82 (2027)	1	3	3	2	9
GA83 (2028)	2	1	2	0	5
Total	5	6	6	2	19

Although the Third Committee's Roadmap initially envisaged progressive reductions over three General Assembly sessions (GA81–GA83), ***resolutions adopted during the past four Human Rights Council sessions (HRC60-63) have already generated the full cumulative reduction of 19 reports, beyond the number originally contemplated,*** a maximum of 15 reports.

IV. Thematic Balance and Visibility

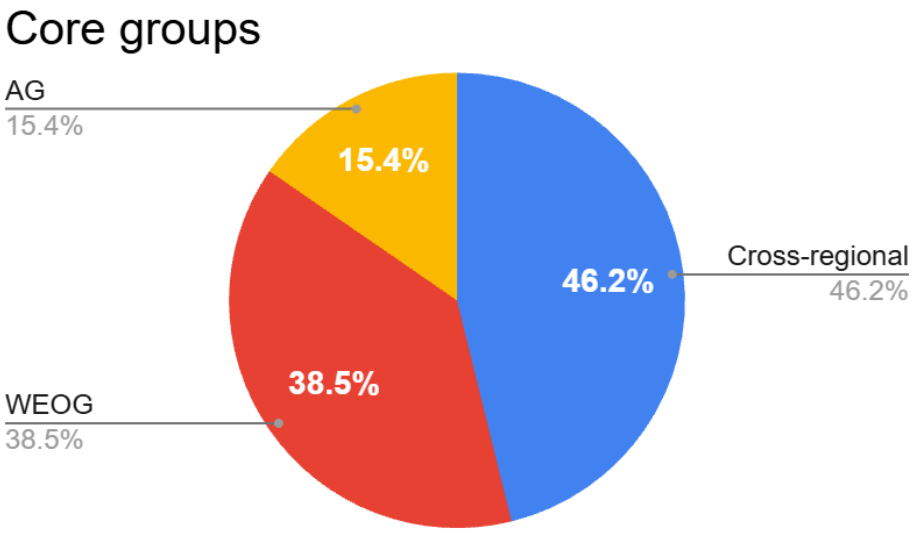
One of the primary concerns raised by civil society organisations is the thematic balance and how it may negatively impact the visibility of certain issues at the General Assembly. Nonetheless, reporting reductions were broadly distributed across the three thematic clusters, with mandates relating to rule of law, accountability and civil space, and development, economic, social and cultural rights (DESC) accounted for about 77% of mandates facing cuts.

Special Procedures cluster	**Mandates facing reporting cut in HRC60-63**	**Mandates renewed in HRC60-63**	**All thematic mandates**
Development, Economic, Social and Cultural rights (DESC)	5(38%)	13 (39%)	17 (37%)
Equality and Non-Discrimination (END)	3 (23%)	7 (21%)	11 (24%)
Rule of Law, Accountability and Civil Space (RACS)	5 (38%)	13 (39%)	18 (39%)
Total	13	33	46

The thematic mandates are clustered according to the division used by OHCHR's Special Procedures Branch. Figures may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

V. Main actors

WEOG States, along with cross-regional groups that include at least one WEOG country, are the main penholders driving changes to reporting practices. Notable exceptions include the termination of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy, championed by a core group comprising Japan, Brazil, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Fiji, India, Kyrgyzstan and Morocco, and two initiatives to reduce reporting led by the African Group during HRC63.



VI. Language used in the resolutions to reduce periodicity of reporting

There's no uniform language around reporting reductions. Some resolutions state the specific sessions where mandate holders are meant to report to; others vaguely state they should be reporting biennially to the General Assembly. Still, others state they should report biennially and define from which session they should do so.

Examples:

- Requests the Special Rapporteur to continue to report, on an annual basis, to the Human Rights Council and, on a **biennial basis, to the General Assembly, as of its 82nd session** (Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living)
- Requests the Special Rapporteur to continue to report on an annual basis to the Human Rights Council and to the General Assembly **at its 81st and 83rd sessions,** and urges any **financial efficiency savings made in relation to this change in reporting frequency to be used to support the wider activities of the mandate, in particular country visits** (Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders)
- Requests the Special Rapporteur to present an annual report to the Human Rights Council and to present a **report to the General Assembly at its 81st and 83rd sessions** (Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities)
- Also requests the Special Rapporteur to continue to report annually on the implementation of the mandate to the Human Rights Council and **biennially to the General Assembly**, in accordance with their respective programmes of work (Special Rapporteur on the sale, sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children)

Language that biennialises reporting rather than cutting a specific session presents two risks: first, over a six-year period (i.e. two renewals), it would reduce reporting by half, compared with a one-third reduction if a single session were cut per three-year renewal period. Second, it would

remove flexibility in choosing which years are most appropriate for reducing reporting, such as following the appointment of a new mandate holder or when a mandate holder considers it strategically appropriate.

VII. Overall reduction of thematic reporting to the General Assembly

In 2026, there are currently 46 thematic Special Procedures mandates[6]. Among these, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention is only required to submit a written report annually to the Human Rights Council. On the other hand, the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances' Chair engages in an interactive dialogue with the General Assembly every year without presenting a written report. Similarly, the Working Group on Discrimination against Women and Girls also only reports orally each year to the General Assembly.

Therefore, out of the 46 thematic Special Procedures mandates, 43 submit written reports to the General Assembly. Two of them only report orally, and one does not report at all. ***To date, 13 mandates have had their General Assembly reporting periodicity reduced, been merged, or been terminated, representing 30% of the 43 thematic mandates that report in writing to the General Assembly***. *This means that close to a third of these mandates have already been affected by the current rationalisation process.*

VIII. Implications and recommendations

The analysis demonstrates the need for a more strategic and coordinated approach to any further consideration of changes to Special Procedures reporting. Reporting reductions should not be treated as an automatic or purely numerical means of reducing the Third Committee's workload, but assessed individually and cumulatively in light of their impact on mandate implementation, the visibility of human rights issues at the General Assembly, and opportunities for engagement with mandate holders.

In considering any future changes to reporting requirements, States should:

- **Undertake a case-by-case assessment and meaningfully consult mandate holders** before modifying reporting requirements, taking into account the substantive needs of the mandate and when engagement with the General Assembly is most strategically important.
- **Prefer targeted, time-limited changes over permanent reductions in reporting periodicity.** Where a reduction is considered necessary, identifying specific sessions in which reporting will not take place preserves greater flexibility than establishing indefinite biennial reporting. Any change should be reviewed at the mandate's next renewal rather than automatically becoming the new baseline.

[6] The mandate of the SR on leprosy is included here for the purpose of this analysis as it is currently reflected in the list provided by OHCHR.

- **Preserve meaningful engagement with the General Assembly.** Where written reporting is reduced, alternative opportunities for substantive interaction between mandate holders, Member States and civil society in New York should be maintained where possible.
- **Ensure that efficiencies strengthen mandate implementation.** Savings resulting from reduced reporting should, to the greatest extent possible, be retained for other substantive mandate activities, including country visits, communications and engagement with affected communities and civil society. The approach adopted for the Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, which aligned the reduction in reporting with the participation of the mandate holder in the UN Water Conference, provides a useful precedent.
- **Assess the cumulative and thematic impact before pursuing further reductions.** States should consider the effects of changes across the Special Procedures system as a whole, including whether they disproportionately reduce the visibility of particular rights or groups at the General Assembly.

Efforts to improve the efficiency and working methods of the Third Committee should ultimately preserve the effectiveness and independence of Special Procedures and meaningful engagement between the human rights system in Geneva and the General Assembly in New York.