



GENEVA CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS  
ADVANCEMENT AND GLOBAL DIALOGUE

## UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

### Panel Discussion on Early Warning and Genocide Prevention

#HRC58 • 5 March 2025



#### BACKGROUND AND THEME

In its resolution 55/13, the Human Rights Council decided to convene, at its fifty-eighth session, a panel discussion on **early warning and genocide prevention** and requested OHCHR to ensure that the panel discussion was accessible to persons with disabilities.

#### OPENING STATEMENTS

##### **Ms. Nada AL-NASHIF, United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights**

76 years ago, the UNGA adopted the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (hereby referred to as the '1948 Convention') as its first human rights convention, just one day before the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Today, there are once again horrifying indications of atrocity crimes, up to and including genocide, in several regions of the world. We are living through dangerous times, as deep divisions and extreme views feed both conflict and violence. The global norms that protect us all, starting with the UN Charter and the UDHR, are under unprecedented strain. The UN was set up after the Holocaust in large part to prevent any repetition of the heinous crime of genocide.



## Prevention without action is an empty slogan

There are many concrete actions that we can take to prevent genocide and other atrocity crimes. First and foremost, prevention requires all governments and all parties to conflict, to respect international law fully. Member States have the primary responsibility to **prevent conflict** and to build peace. The rules of war were designed to limit and prevent human suffering in times of armed conflict. Wanton disregard for them has led to the current extremes of human suffering and risks of genocide and other atrocity crimes that we see today. The new Agenda for Peace, agreed as part of the Pact for the Future last September, has a strong emphasis on prevention. Through it, all states reaffirm their commitment to their obligations under international law, including the prohibition of genocide, of crimes against humanity and war crimes overall. And yet, the daily litany of transgressions continues unabated.

Second, prevention means understanding root causes and **responding quickly to early warnings** of the risk of genocide. Genocide and other atrocity crimes are preceded by clear patterns of discrimination, of exclusion and incitement to hatred, based on race, ethnicity, religion or other characteristics. Hate speech is often a precursor to genocide, making the United Nations strategy and plan of action on hate speech all the more important. Digital technologies and AI have amplified the impacts of hate speech, often disproportionately targeting women and girls. In fact, some 70% of those targeted by online hate belong to minority communities. Early warning signs also include other systematic violations of human rights, often perpetrated as a matter of policy against a people, a minority or a community.

Third, prevention means **looking beyond the crimes themselves** and considering activities that may be enabling or contributing to those crimes. Among these, arms sales and transfers, the provision of military, logistical or financial support to parties to conflicts that are marked by violations of international law, these are obvious examples that merit careful review.

Fourth, **accountability** plays a critical part in prevention. When there are allegations of serious violations of international law, it is essential that there is due reckoning through credible and impartial accountability processes. OHCHR documents and reports on human rights violations and abuses around the world. States should support these efforts based on a robust and proven methodology. Accountability also demands consistent support to international mechanisms, including the International Criminal Court; full cooperation in the investigation and prosecution of human rights violations or abuses amounting to international crimes; and respect for the binding decisions of such mechanisms. Universal jurisdiction enables States to investigate and try crimes under international law in national courts consistent with international standards. This is another important accountability mechanism, thereby urging all States to make full use of it.

## UN advocacy and accountability efforts worldwide

OHCHR and the wider United Nations system are working at the global level to prevent and end genocide and other atrocious crimes through strengthening advocacy and accountability for violations of international law and by focussing on hate speech, the misuse of social media platforms and incitement to religious hatred. OHCHR launched a regional strategy two years ago with the Horn of Africa that aims to prevent the spread and dissemination of all forms of hate speech online and in real life. OHCHR also runs education programmes of previous genocides to raise awareness and make people aware that such things can and do happen. UN human rights



teams around the world work with UN partners and governments to promote ways of countering incitement to racial, religious and other forms of hatred. Hopefully, today's panel will help us to build on OHCHR's joint work with the Office of the Special Advisor to the UNSG of the Prevention of Genocide, including through advisory services and technical assistance to States.

### **Genocide as the failure of humanity's moral compass**

Preventing and avoiding genocide and mass atrocity crimes requires an unwavering commitment - from States, from CSOs, the private sector and beyond - to the causes of human rights, democracy and the rule of law that exists to protect us all. When States undermine, denigrate or ignore international law and the institutions that uphold them, they increase the risk of crimes of this magnitude occurring again. Genocide happens when humanity's moral compass fails, when hateful ideologies proliferate and when the dehumanisation of an entire group of people is allowed to take root and to spread. Together, let's move towards a world in which genocide and other atrocity crimes are inconceivable or, if all else fails, then they are punished.

### **Ms. Virginia GAMBA DE POTGIETER, Acting Special Adviser to the United Nations Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide**

The Acting Special Adviser stands today before the Council to address a pressing concern that has haunted humanity for many years - the scourge of the crime of genocide. Today's gathering in this august forum reminds us of the solemn promise made by the international community over and over to prevent this most heinous crime from occurring again. Yet, despite our collective efforts, the risks of genocide and the serious allegations of commission of this crime continue to be present in our world. The devastating consequences of inaction are etched in the memories of Rwanda, Srebrenica and Cambodia.

### **Early warning and accountability as a collective responsibility**

The continued attention by United Nations intergovernmental organs, including the Human Rights Council, to a number of situations in the world today where risk factors are present constitutes a stern reminder that the fulfilment of this promise continues, requiring all possible dedicated action and efforts. Genocide takes time to plan and execute. The risk factors are present and visible. Therefore, early warning and prevention are critical components to prevent genocide. It is our collective responsibility to recognise the risk factors as the early signs of impending genocide and related atrocity crimes and take decisive and timely action. Early warning systems must be strengthened, international cooperation enhanced and accountability for those responsible ensured. Accountability remains critical because the absence of it constitutes a risk factor in itself.

The UN Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes provides a valuable tool for identifying risk factors and assessing the risk of genocide, war crimes and ethnic cleansing, as well as crimes against humanity. However, we must do more to operationalise this framework and ensure its effective implementation. This includes, by Member States, also in fulfilment of their responsibility to protect populations from such crimes and violations. Central to today's panel discussion, we must do more to address the root causes of genocide, including hate speech, discrimination and impunity. We must promote inclusive and tolerant societies where diversity is celebrated and protected.



### **Time for action is now – The role of UN human rights mechanisms**

For this, the work of the Human Rights Council, UN treaty bodies and special procedures, as well as regional human rights mechanisms will remain central. Enhancing assessment and prevention capacity at the regional level will also be essential. The time for action is now. We owe it to the victims of past genocides and to future generations. The Council must strengthen early warning systems and enhance international cooperation to prevent genocide and related atrocity crimes, including working with Member States, who have the primary responsibility to protect populations as well as with regional organisations and mechanisms. Continue to work hard to ensure accountability for those responsible for genocide and related atrocity crimes.

### **Serious breaches human rights and IHL fuelling the spectre of genocide**

Impunity breeds cycles of violence. Serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, when not halted, can lead to the commission of genocide and other atrocity crimes. Finally, continue prioritising efforts to address the root causes of genocide, including hate speech and systemic discrimination. The international community must promote, protect and respect human rights as a basis of prevention. The UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech is an essential tool to address and counter this dynamic. OHCHR, as focal point for the implementation of this strategy, works to advance our collective efforts in this direction.

OHCHR will remain available to continue providing assistance to UN country teams and Member States requiring and requesting this support. Together we can create a world where genocide is a relic of the past - a world where human rights are respected, protected and fulfilled for all. We must continue working in this direction with all possible commitment and determination.

### **STATEMENTS BY PANELLISTS**

#### **Mr. Juan E. MÉNDEZ, Professor of Human Rights Law in Residence at the American University, Washington College of Law, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (USA)**

Against the backdrop of a very uncertain world, it is encouraging to see that the discussions and actions embarked upon in the mid-2000s, including the development of the ‘Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine’, are again present in the international community. The two decades that have passed have not seen a great improvement in our collective ability to prevent mass atrocities.

In fact, the spectre of genocide has continued to haunt us in some places like Darfur in Sudan, with history seeming to repeat itself in ways no less tragic now than then. This should be an indication to all of us that, in addition to the urgency to respond to these enormous risks to our common humanity, we need to analyse the reasons why the initiatives embarked upon in the early and mid-2000s did not bear the fruits that we expected. One important lesson learned is not to get stuck on the definition of genocide as a prelude to any international action.

It is appropriate to concentrate on the risk that what are now **crimes against humanity or war crimes or serious human rights violations can become genocide** unless we act to prevent them. The definition of genocide includes a specific intent that is almost never made explicit, though it certainly can be gleaned from the actions on the ground. If we wait until all elements of the definition are in place, we have not prevented genocide from happening.



Twenty years ago and now, we discussed the need for early warning of situations that, if left unattended, can deteriorate into genocide as defined in the 1948 Convention. What constitutes early warning will **always be debatable**, but we know that it should precede that deterioration with enough time to deploy efforts, diplomatic, political, peacemaking, peacekeeping, and even military efforts designed to alter the course of events. That is why the early warning cannot be separated from the early action that is required to prevent genocide. In other words, it is not enough to issue alerts to the international community about a situation that is trending toward mass atrocities. The warning has to be accompanied with suggestions for what the international community can and must do to reverse that trend. Early warning requires a very fluid flow of information and access to that information in as real time as possible. It also requires in-depth analysis of the factors and circumstances that are pushing that particular situation in the direction of genocide.

Examples and comparisons with other situations in other historical, geographic, or cultural settings will always be helpful, especially if those examples also yield some successful or partially successful experiments with prevention. However, it is important to recognise that **genocidal crises are very idiosyncratic**. It follows that what works in one set of circumstances may not be applicable in other situations. The information gathered in early warning must have a particular dynamic quality because the crisis itself will always be very dynamic. Factors that succeed in putting brakes on the deterioration may disappear very quickly, making it necessary to adjust the recommendations for international action to allow quick shifts and adaptation to changes on the ground.

For the same reason that it is vital to have **access to the information flow**, including open sources but also reports from the ground by responsible actors and observers in the field, it is also crucial to have as direct access as possible to the institutions and decision makers that are in a position to formulate policy and affect the reality on the ground. Access to the Security Council must necessarily come through the office of the Secretary General. The Executive Office must have the political will to listen and convey rapidly the information to the Security Council.

In turn, the **Security Council** must also have the political will to listen and consider the warnings and the recommendations for action that are made on the basis of the changing reality on the ground. The serious problems that we face in this area should not deter us from taking stock of some advances that the international community has achieved. The R2P doctrine has been ratified by the General Assembly several times since its adoption in the World Summit of 2005, and the resistance to it remains confined to a stubborn minority of States.

The UN can build upon the majority view that considers **R2P** worthy of support and continue to rebuild from it the mechanisms that are designed to make it operational. In addition, the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice are also instruments that can turn judicial action into effective tools of prevention. Of course, a major roadblock will continue to be the **lack of political will to act collectively to protect** populations at risk. But it is also true that political will is constructed and developed in each case, mostly through the mobilisation of public opinion that can be made with sound information and viable proposals for action. Experience shows that the **early warning**, early action required must proceed simultaneously on four fronts.



The first one is **protection**. Once we identify a population that is at risk of mass atrocities, we must propose means to protect them from harm in various ways, including military deployment of a defensive nature if necessary. And it is worth noting that the will to intervene does not always require military presence. Civilian observers can sometimes very effectively provide protection by being there and reporting to the world.

The second is **humanitarian assistance** because populations at risk are already suffering from displacement and urgent need for food, medical care, and education for children. In addition, relief in today's world is dispensed in a way that places literally hundreds of volunteers among the vulnerable population, thus acting as an important measure of protection as well.

The third is **accountability**, and here I wish to agree with the Deputy High Commissioner and with Ms. Gamba on the importance of the accountability for serious crimes already committed against a group at risk. Impunity for those crimes only encourages new crimes. Also, the victimised population needs to exercise agency to defend their own rights, and this can only begin to happen in a scenario in which they see justice being done.

The fourth is **peace negotiations** because the underlying conflict that threatens to result in genocide must be addressed and resolved without ostensible winners and losers. This negotiation must lead in stages to ceasefires first and then to armistice and demobilisation and disarmament. It is important to adopt measures in each of these four areas simultaneously, even if at given times one or more of the areas take precedence in terms of effort and investment. Even more important is to be able to encourage action in each area that is meant to address the dynamic changes on the ground, including ways to address factors that are seen as accelerants of the risk of mass atrocities, as well as those that have potential to deter and retard the negative trends.

To conclude, there is a need to avoid a tendency observed in the 2000s, namely **the refusal to use the word genocide**, even if we predicate it by insisting that we are only referring to the likelihood that a current crisis could become genocidal. We heard repeatedly that crisis X was insurgency or counterinsurgency or counterterrorism or a state of war. In each case, the example we used allows some of us to say, but it is not genocide. The obvious mistake was to assume that such conflicts, even if accurately described, could not also result in genocide. Maybe our collective risk of reluctance was a way to avoid moral obligations. The effect was to engage in endless characterisations and differentiations while tragedies continued to unfold. Hopefully, this time around we will be more willing to use the word genocide when appropriate and as a call for action.

**Mr. Sean D. MURPHY, Professor of International Law at the George Washington University Law School, USA**

Mr. Murphy focusses on the relationship of early warning and prevention of genocide to early warning of crimes against humanity, given that crimes against humanity will be the subject of diplomatic negotiations over the next four years for the adoption of a new UN Convention. Simply put, whenever genocide occurs, it is inevitable that crimes against humanity also occur. A crime against humanity exists whenever there is a widespread or systematic attack on the civilian population taking the form of various types of acts such as murder, serious bodily injury or mental harm, enforced sterilisation, and forcible transfer of population - in short, all of the acts identified



in Article 2 of the 1948 Convention. While crimes against humanity can occur in a situation where genocide is not occurring, the opposite is not true. Commission of genocide inescapably entails crimes against humanity.

Thus, techniques for early warning and prevention of crimes against humanity can equally serve as a method for early warning and prevention of genocide. On 4 December 2024, the UNGA passed Resolution 79/122, which launched the process for a **diplomatic negotiation of a new UN Convention**. If successful, those negotiations will lead to the adoption of the UN Convention on Prevention and Punishment of Crimes Against Humanity. This resolution calls for Preparatory Committee meetings in 2026 and 2027 to be followed by diplomatic negotiations in 2028 and 2029. Thus, if all goes well, the Convention will be adopted in 2029 and enter into force at some point thereafter. The central impetus for these negotiations are draft articles published in 2019 by the UN International Law Commission (ILC) for which I had the privilege to serve as Special Rapporteur.

Those draft articles are available on the ILC's website along with detailed commentary that explains the meaning and legal basis for the draft articles. Several elements of the ILC's draft articles address prevention. **Draft Article 3** would obligate States to prevent crimes against humanity whether or not committed in time of armed conflict. **Draft Article 4** is dedicated to that obligation of prevention requiring states in conformity with international law to take effective legislative, administrative, judicial, or other appropriate preventative measures in any territory under the state's jurisdiction. Further, Draft Article 4 would obligate states to cooperate in this regard with other states, with relevant international organisations, and as appropriate with other organisations. **Draft Article 5** would obligate states not to return persons to a country where there are substantial grounds for believing that he or she would be in danger of being subjected to crimes against humanity. Though not expressly styled as an early warning mechanism, **Draft Article 8** obligates each state to undertake a prompt, thorough, and impartial investigation whenever there is reasonable ground to believe that acts constituting crimes against humanity are being committed in any territory under its jurisdiction. In short, if the start of a genocide likely would consist of crimes against humanity, then detecting such crimes at an early stage through investigation can serve as early warning that a genocide might soon unfold.

The ILC's draft articles do not call for the **establishment of an institutional mechanism** for the new Convention. The ILC elected not to make any proposal in that regard, leaving it to governments to address that issue in the course of diplomatic negotiations. One possibility is to create a new Treaty Committee. Another possibility is to accord certain responsibilities under the Convention to existing UN bodies, such as OHCHR or the Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, including the Office of the Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide. Presumably States will wish to be thoughtful and effective in pursuing these mechanisms and perhaps even be innovative in that regard, yet with an eye to limited resources and the avoidance of duplication. When negotiating over the next few years the rights and obligations that will be embedded in a new UN Convention on the prevention and punishment of crimes against humanity, there will be great benefit in drawing upon the lessons learned and best practises developed for the prevention of genocide. Since Mr. Murphy will be asked to serve as an expert to the United Nations for those negotiations, he welcomes learning more about early warning and prevention of genocide, given the synergies between these two types of atrocity.



Adopting a new UN Convention would be an important step in furthering international human rights law as well as international criminal law. But to truly succeed, it should be done with an eye to the strengths and weaknesses of other areas of international law, in particular rules and mechanisms aimed at preventing genocide.

**Ms. Savita PAWNDAY, Executive Director of the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, USA**

Today's discussion lies at the heart of the idea of the responsibility to protect that emerged to precisely bridge the gap between early warning and effective action. As we mark the 20th anniversary of R2P this year, we stand at the cusp of a shifting world order marked by relentless attacks against international norms and institutions created to safeguard humanity. Now more than ever is the time to take stock and renew our commitment to principled diplomacy and multilateralism.

Thanks to the work of civil society organisations like the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, we have a **more sophisticated understanding** of the dynamics of how atrocity crimes, including war crimes and crimes against humanity, are committed in the context as different as Afghanistan, the Sahel, Venezuela, or the West Bank, and the factors that can mitigate their commission. In the case of crime of genocide, our understanding has evolved beyond the frameworks used to study the Holocaust to better understand how 21st century genocides against the Rohingyas, the Yazidis, the Uyghurs, or against the Palestinians in Gaza have been orchestrated and committed.

In many of these cases, while perpetrators often pursue policies of mass killing and ethnic cleansing, genocides have been perpetrated through the **erasure of a group's identity** and their cultural destruction. Recognising these evolving methods essential for effective prevention and response. We also have a much better understanding of the diversity of tools available at the multilateral, regional, and national levels to respond to emerging or protracted crises.

The international community has increasingly leveraged accountability mechanisms, including sophisticated ways to monitor and preserve evidence. Peacekeepers have often stood as shields between perpetrators and victims, and we have developed more effective strategies to protect the most vulnerable, including women and children. Yet all too often, **responses to atrocity risks remain selective and shaped by political interests**.

Broad-based cross-regional solidarity with Ukraine demonstrated that when there is sufficient will, governments are able to mobilise rapid response and uphold their responsibility to protect. However, this stands in sharp contrast to the failure of many to prevent, acknowledge, or even condemn the genocide in Gaza and the apartheid policies in place against the Palestinians. Meanwhile, many cross-regional governments, while rightly criticising Western bias, remain silent on the mounting evidence of atrocity crimes against the Rohingya, the Uyghurs, or the non-Arab communities in Darfur. **Selective application of international law erodes the credibility** of the multilateral system created to preserve it. Consistent application of double standards dilutes protection regimes and makes everyone unsafe.

The **divide between Geneva and New York** also remains a barrier to the cohesive action. As mentioned today, and often seen, early warning information produced by Geneva-based





mechanisms are not consistently funnelled into decision-making processes in New York, including in the discussions at the UN Security Council. Bridging the gap is essential to ensuring more holistic and effective response to atrocity risks.

Civil society organisations (CSOs), human rights defenders and affected communities are often the first to detect and respond to early warning signs, document atrocities and diffuse tensions, even amid escalating violence. When violence erupts, they lead unarmed protection strategies that save lives and in the aftermath drive advocacy for justice, accountability and reconciliation. Despite their expertise and frontline experience, human rights defenders and affected communities are often excluded from formal decision-making processes. In addition to practical barriers that prevent CSOs from engaging directly with decision-makers, affected communities are frequently directed between various UN offices without receiving clear guidance or advocate support regarding the functioning of the system, how can they effectively engage with it and what outcomes they can reasonably expect? One example of this is a pending follow-up on the third referral to the OSAPG on the situation in the Uyghur region.

Reinvigorating our collective responsibility to **protect populations from atrocity crimes requires principled positions on crisis situations**, bridging institutional divides and embedding the perspective of affected communities at the heart of decision-making. Over the years, the UNHRC has taken important steps to respond to emerging crises, often through the rapid establishment of investigative mechanisms and fact-finding missions, such as most recently in the context of the DRC. However, too often, this initial action is treated as the end of the process rather than the beginning of a sustained international engagement on a crisis. Once these mechanisms deliver their findings, meaningful political follow-up is frequently lacking. The decision to terminate the investigations into Ethiopia at the very moment its experts reported that atrocity risks remain imminent is a stark example of this failure. Let us learn from it.

As we gather here, the DRC, is on the brink yet again. While the establishment of the fact-finding mission was an important first step towards accountability and preventing records, more must be done to translate the findings and analysis into meaningful and timely political action. The R2B is not just a principle. It is a promise to the world's most vulnerable populations. Let us honour that promise, not with words, but with action. The credibility of the very system that made us gather here today and the lives of countless people depends on it. **Protecting populations from atrocity crimes requires courage**, not convenience.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

On the definition of genocide, **Mr. Juan MÉNDEZ** explains he does not want to be misinterpreted in relation to the use of a definition of genocide that is different from the 1948 Convention. By that, he wants to say that there is a contradiction between early warning and waiting for all of the elements for the definition of genocide to be fully evident because most of the deciding factors for genocide is not the specific act to eliminate in part or in full an entire community. Sometimes it can only be discerned after the event. Therefore, when genocide occurs in a protracted way, it is important to determine which factors accelerate the traits of genocide when not all of the components for the definition of genocide are present.

On another note, if we have a very efficient framework - namely the 1948 Convention according to the ICJ and the substantive part, this is indeed, of course, customary law and these obligations



apply to all, including the obligation to prevent and punish genocide - this is just conscience. These are peremptory norms of international law. What we need are concrete measures to be able to operationalise and give effect to these measures in practise within the United Nations and in particular in the international community.

**Mr. Sean D. MURPHY** views the issue of prevention of these atrocities as breaking down into three general areas. One aspect is what can be done with international organisations to strengthen them, to reform them, to make them a more meaningful aspect of early warning and prevention. Another aspect is how to promote cooperation among states and between international organisations and states in order to bring about prevention of genocide and crimes against humanity and so on. The third component is extremely important and that is what can States themselves do individually to address early warning and prevention. In this regard, part of the project that the International Law Commission undertook on crimes against humanity was to focus in on what have states done themselves domestically to address issues of crimes against humanity. Mr. Murphy was rather surprised to find that **about half of the countries of the world had no national law prohibiting crimes against humanity**. Although he has not looked at that in the context of genocide, but he would not be surprised to find that a very large number of countries have not adapted a national law criminalising genocide.

Domestically, States can take measures such as adopting national laws, national policies, keeping those laws and policies under continual review and improving them as needed. This would include steps such as educating government officials, police officials, military personnel about what is genocide, what are crimes against humanity, and how might they be identified and prevented *ab initio*. Concerning what might be done with respect to social media, hate speech, and even corporate activity, these are all matters that, in the first instance, governments should be thinking hard about domestic policies and regulation in order to address those types of concerns as it relates to prevention of genocide.

**Ms. Savita PAWNDAY** recalls two landmark reports commissioned by the UNSG, the Petri report on Sri Lanka and the Rosenthal report on Myanmar, conducted a decade apart, examined UN failures in responding to mass atrocities. Neither of these reports identified a lack of early warning, either as a primary, secondary, or even a factor in the unresponsiveness of the UN to these crises. Instead, these reports pointed to the same systemic failures, a lack of cohesion within the UN system, and most damningly, the absence of political will from member states to act on atrocities happening before their eyes.

20 years of doing this work on responsibility to protect and genocide prevention, she urges Member States to just not constantly fall back on the refrain of more early action, more early warning. There is enough early warning. The OHCHR system, the entire human rights regime based in Geneva, produces enough early warning.

Now it is time that this analysis produced by the system is centred better in the Office of the Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide and R2P, and the analysis produced by the advisory body of Prevention of Genocide and R2P is more centred in OHCHR. To conclude, these failures are not an abstract institutional shortcoming. They have life and death consequences for communities facing unimaginable suffering. For victims and survivors of atrocity crimes, the multilateral system, and in particular the UNHRC, often represents the last hope for recognition,



justice, and protection. For many, this is the only forum that they can bring their voices to, their testimonies, and their suffering to the attention of the world. For many, what is happening here is not an academic exercise or a procedural exercise. **It is a question of survival.** The international community will not act the same way in every situation, or neither the responses will be swift or sufficient. But we must never fail to do the bare minimum, which is to acknowledge the harm that is being committed against multiple populations across the world. Acknowledgement is the first step towards accountability. The **UNHRC must serve as a constant forum of hope**, a place where affected communities know they will be heard, and their suffering will not be erased or ignored. That brings us to the end.

## INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE

### Views Expressed by State Delegations

Taking the floor on on behalf of the Group of Friends of the R2P, **Australia** recalls that the adoption of the 2005 World Summit outcome document which recognised R2P reflected a historic commitment to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing. Human rights mechanisms play an important role in advancing preventative action. Special procedures can contribute to early warning of atrocity risk factors. The UPR has opened space for dialogue on how to strengthen national resilience and HRC mandated investigative mechanisms can help to achieve accountability and serve as an important deterrent of further atrocity crimes. As we commemorate the 20th anniversary of R2P, the Group of Friends renews our commitment to the R2P and to Realising the Potential of the HRC in Preventing and Responding to Atrocity Crimes. They also urge the Office of the Special Advisors to share its early warning assessments and recommendations with the wider UN membership including the HRC.

On behalf of a group of States, the **Russian Federation** stresses that this year we mark the 80th anniversary of the historic victory in the Second World War which was the bloodiest war in human history. It cost the lives of 27 million people from the multi-ethnic Soviet Union who died on the fronts under bombardment in torment and occupation and in concentration camps dying from hunger and cold. The Group recalls that the acts of the major Nazi criminals who bear full responsibility for the outbreak of the Second World War were recognised as criminal by the ruling of the International Tribunal in Nuremberg. It recognised that the Nazis and their accomplices had expelled and exterminated civilians. All of these heinous crimes should be viewed as a genocide of the peoples of the Soviet Union. The Group finds it unacceptable to seek to glorify the Nazis and their accomplices. Any attempts to place equal responsibility for the outbreak of the Second World War on the Soviet Union and on Nazi Germany are immoral and insulting to the memory of the tens of millions of people who fell to free the world from the horrors of National Socialism. It is our solemn duty to preserve the truth about the shared victory of Nazism and to prevent a resurgence of the ideologies of hate, discrimination, ethnic, racial and religious hatred, and any other human acts.

Speaking on behalf of the African Group, **Ghana** reaffirms the Group's commitment to strengthening early warning and preventive action to combat the risk of genocide and mass atrocities. The African Union Continental Early Warning System provides real-time alerts on emerging crises and the panel of the wise engages in preventive diplomacy and mediation under the auspices of the AU Peace and Security Council. While significant progress has been made,



challenges persist. Strengthening coordination, ensuring timely interventions and reinforcing accountability mechanisms. The African Union calls for stronger AU and EU cooperation for increased investment in conflict prevention and peace building and a renewed global commitment to ending impunity for perpetrators of atrocities that may lead to genocide. We urge the international community to support Africa to strengthen regional peace initiatives and enhance national and regional early warning mechanisms. The African Group reaffirms our commitment to preventing genocide to ensure that never again is not just a promise but a reality.

The **State of Palestine** explains that as the Council debates on the question of genocide, Israel is committing genocide and ethnic cleansing against the Palestinian people. The international community has an obligation to prevent and punish atrocity crimes including genocide, and it must not encourage the commission of international crimes. They must also not stay silent. provision of political support to Israel is necessary against the Palestinian people. The ICJ found it plausible that Israel's act could amount to genocide. Many seem to forget that long before October 2023 the Israeli discourse has always been that of racism, dehumanisation, erasure, and at times outright genocide. The lack of action to prevent and punish genocide and other atrocity crimes is a clear example of the total disregard for the international legal system by states who claim to champion it. To those States supporting Israel by all available means, we ask you, will you continue to accept the damage that your support is having on countless Palestinian civilians and to the credibility of international law and to the international peace and security?

Since its early years of independence, **Azerbaijan** has faced with a brutal discriminatory campaign carried out by Armenia against Azerbaijanis through military aggression and occupation of territory and ethnic cleansing of close to one million of Azerbaijanis. This includes an inhumane massacre of 613 Azerbaijani civilians of Khojaly which has been condemned internationally as an act of genocide. Due to failure of mediators to put an end to occupation, Armenian officials pursued discriminatory policy by invoking the phenomenon of ethnic incompatibility of Armenians and Azerbaijanis and removing any traces of Azerbaijani identity and heritage. Lack of condemnation of Armenia was shown by mediators and attempts to equate the aggressor and the victim inspired Armenia to remain in impunity over its genocidal policy against Azerbaijan for more than three decades. Nowadays, Azerbaijan is gradually realising the rights of affected Azerbaijanis to effective protection and to Azerbaijanis are protected. Azerbaijan suggests promoting regional respect for multiculturalism and diversity, encouraging interreligious harmony and abandoning ideas of monarchism.

**Armenia** underscores the importance of the international legal system and implementation mechanisms which ensure binding decisions are implemented. Prevention needs to be effective when states in the international system react to early warning signs and attack the root causes. It is only through our will and concerted action to make sure this never occurs again.

**Bolivia** reaffirms the prevention of genocide as an international instrument that is effective for the crime of genocide. With a view to protecting effectively constitutional rights, Bolivia has enshrined in its Constitution genocide as a crime not subject to statute of limitations. Bolivia is concerned at the use of social media as an echo chamber for hatred and discrimination. Bolivia is also making efforts to try to create safeguards because the digital world accelerates the spread of propaganda, hate speech and intolerance. As a State Party to the 1948 Convention, Bolivia filed



a declaration of intervention to join the genocide case filed by South Africa against Israel at the ICJ in light of the genocide that is being perpetrated against Palestine.

**Algeria** believes there is a collective responsibility to prevent genocide. This can only occur through the protection from the international community of people who are threatened and faced with discrimination and hatred. It is necessary to adopt multidimensional measures based on awareness raising and combating hate speech by encouraging equality and justice. It underscores the importance of international and regional organisations who could halt acts that could lead to genocide and hold to account those who promote genocide. Only justice can halt the path of genocide and the international community must not allow for any division in international law and accountability. The international community needs to support the proposals from South Africa with a view to international peace and strengthen early warning mechanisms.

**Russia** strongly supports efforts to prevent the crime of genocide. To prevent and combat this gravest of international crimes, we have created a durable international legal framework in the forms of the 1948 and 1968 conventions. The impetus for their adoption were the mass crimes by Nazi Germany and their accomplices in the Second World War, which were condemned in the Nuremberg Court. It is widely recognised that the crimes of the Nazis enjoy no statute of limitations. Russia works on a large scale in this regard to investigate newly identified evidence. Evidence of mass killings of Soviet civilians and prisons of war, torture, slave labour, and other manifestations of the inhumane Nazi ideology point to a targeted, planned, and unprecedented genocide. Currently, some states pursue their geopolitical interests by continuing to speculate about Russia's supposed violations of its obligations under the 1948 Convention in the context of events in Ukraine. In this regard, we would like to recall that by a decision of the ICJ of the 2nd of February 2024, these accusations towards Russia were rejected. Therefore, only one issue remains for the Court to consider, that of whether Ukraine has committed genocide in Donbass. In conclusion, Russia notes its complete disagreement with attempts to broaden the interpretation of state's domestic law of the international legal term of genocide.

**Cuba** condemns any acts of genocide, war crime, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. It rejects the claims of some to use the so-called early warning concept as a responsibility to protect, to lead to interventionist actions. If the real intent is to prevent an early warning mechanism, why do we not invoke the responsibility to avoid genocide as is being committed against the Palestinian people? The early warning mechanism, the responsibility to protect, are they being used as a motivation for the cruel embargo on Cuba? This clearly can be defined as an act of genocide under Article 2 of the 1948 Convention. The responsibility to protect unfortunately is invoked in a selective opportunistic way by powerful States as yet another tool to promote hegemonic interfering agenda. We need to see genuine political will so that UN mechanisms are truly effective in preventing genocide and other crimes.

According to **Panama**, history of humanity has repeatedly shown us that genocide is a process that rarely begins without any warning. We have seen early warning that leads to this atrocious crime. Against this backdrop, the role of the OHCHR, the treaty bodies, special procedures in the UPR has been widely recognised as significantly contributing to identifying risk factors and recommending measures to address violations and human rights abuses that could lead to genocide. Intersectional analysis and the integration of a gender-based focus and participation



of women and young people are fundamental for early warning systems and prevention of genocide. It is also crucial that we examine the potential of new technologies to support these efforts. Furthermore, the transfer and proliferation of arms and munitions not only initiates, sustains and exacerbates conflicts and crises, but they also can provide the means to which genocide is committed.

Reaffirming that genocide prevention requires early and decisive action, **Afghanistan** sees clear warning signs in the case of the killing of civilians in Gaza. Cognisant of its vital importance for its people and for its countries, Afghanistan signed and ratified the 1948 Convention. However, with the complete disregard of Afghanistan's international treaty obligation, the de facto Taliban regime under the de facto Taliban regime, the warning signs of breach of this convention are now undeniable. The Taliban's summary execution of prisoners of war and collective punishment of the people of Panjshir and Andhra in September 2022 as reported by Amnesty International are among the early warning signs. Moreover, our Hazara Shia community has long faced systematic persecution and now further escalating under the Taliban. The Hazaras have been wholly excluded from the governance and judiciary and law enforcement leaving them defenceless. This marginalisation is reinforced through targeted killing, forced displacement and the destruction of religious and cultural sites. Mr. President, these patterns align with the recognised indicators of genocide. The convention obligates states to act before genocide occurs.

Highlighting one worrying conflict, the **United Kingdom** continues to see disturbing reports of ethnically motivated attacks and killings in Darfur. The international community must hold perpetrators to account. As well as protection from and accountability for atrocities, we need earlier action to prevent atrocities from occurring in the first place. The UK is concerned by escalating tensions across South Sudan, including between parties to the 2018 peace agreement and call on all parties to act urgently to prevent further violence, including against civilians. The UK supports efforts to improve early warning systems, including leveraging global advances in data analytics and open-source intelligence, allowing the international community to identify and understand the emerging risk of atrocities.

**Kuwait** condemns any act that could lead to acts of genocide, by stressing that targeting some minorities on the basis of race, religion or other grounds are grave human rights violations and could lead to grave and catastrophic consequences such as forced exile and torture. In this context, Kuwait points to the suffering of the Palestinian people, which requires that the international community take a swift decision to put an end to it.

Describing genocide is the most heinous crime recognized internationally since the end of the Second World War, **Oman** stresses the importance of preventive mechanisms to warn us of closely following developments in the situation and to take measures that can prevent such acts. Today, we ask if we need an early warning system when we are in the heart of the storm, when we see that there are about 50,000 Palestinian victims and mass destruction of all infrastructure? Civilian infrastructure such as hospitals and medical and health infrastructure? It is crucial today to put an end to such destruction and to begin reconstruction. This is a crime taking place before our eyes. What should we do? What can be done if we are averting our gaze, continuing to support the perpetrators of such acts with weapons and political and diplomatic support?



Following the tragic events of the past relating to this international crime, **Belarus** believes prevention of genocide remains relevant. In 2025, we mark the 80th anniversary of the shared victory in the Second World War. The lengthy period since 1945 is not a guarantee of non-repetition of the tragic events of the Second World War. After all, the shadows of fascism and neo-Nazism can be seen in speeches by politicians and in the media and social media as well. There is continued hateful rhetoric and confrontation, encouragement of confrontation between ethnicities and religions, paving the way for repetition of those heinous crimes. To uphold the memory of millions of fallen Belarusians, the Prosecutor General of Belarus since April 2021 has been conducting a criminal investigation into the genocide of the Belarusian people in the Great Patriotic War and the post-war period. Belarus solemnly remembers the victims of 80 years ago. A decisive and consistent position on preserving historical memory will help to prevent new manifestations of genocide and will maintain peace and cooperation in accordance with the principles of the UN Charter.

**Venezuela** believes that this is the right place to reject and condemn the genocide that Israel is committing against the Palestinian people. For how long will the world stand aside and watch the atrocious crimes committed by Israel against Palestine? How can we explain the inability of the UN not just to prevent but also to halt a genocide? Venezuela hopes that this kind of place can truly contribute to joint assessment of concrete actions to prevent genocide and avoid the suffering of millions of people. Only genuine dialogue, cooperation and concerted political action across states on the basis of equality and mutual respect can avoid the escalation of conflict that leave an indelible wound on humanity. Finally, do you believe that the Palestinian case has seen double standards and been unable to name things with their proper name? Why is Europe and the US being complacent with Israel in the face of this genocide? Perhaps the non-recognition of genocide against the indigenous peoples of America or against the people of Africa by Europe can explain this behaviour in the face of the genocide in Palestine.

**Sierra Leone** recognises that proactive engagement, robust early warning mechanisms and enhanced international cooperation are essential to fulfilling our shared responsibilities to protect vulnerable populations. Recognising the critical role of early warning in preventing conflict and atrocities, Sierra Leone established the National Early Warning and Response Mechanism Coordinating Office in 2021. This initiative is in line with the ECOWAS Strategic Framework adopted at the 45th Organisation of ECOWAS States and Governments in Ghana in 2014. Sierra Leone recognises the critical role of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide and Preventing Atrocities. It stresses the need for enhanced coordination between these bodies and national governments to strengthen prevention strategies and response efforts. Effective early warning mechanisms are fundamental to preventing mass atrocities. It further calls on the international community to support the expansion of the OSCR capacity in collaboration with the OSCPG, particularly at the regional level, to ensure that early warnings are translated into concrete prevention actions.

**Ukraine** is witnessing the signs of genocide in Russia's War of Aggression, the largest act of militarisation in Europe since the defeat of the Nazi regime eight years ago. Russian authorities systematically deny Ukraine's right to exist and dehumanise Ukrainians through state-controlled media, spreading disinformation and inciting violence. Russia is turning its aggressive rhetoric into deliberate and discriminatory attacks on civilians, the use of sexual violence as a weapon of



war, and the forced deportation of thousands of Ukrainian children to Russia, acts that meet the definition of genocide under the Genocide Convention. Russia pursues a simulative genocide, erasing the national identity of Ukrainian children. Systematic restrictions on access to the Ukrainian language, culture and history, combined with forced reciprocation policies, serve the same genocidal intent - to eliminate Ukraine as a distinct nation. Preventing genocide is not just an imperative, but a legal obligation. Justice must be pursued through the ICC and special tribunals, and Russia must bear full responsibility for the suffering it has inflicted. History is clear. Genocide does not begin with mass killings. It begins with words, impunity and indifference. Ukraine urges all states to act decisively to prevent further atrocities and ensure the right of nations to exist without fear of annihilation.

While obligations to prevent and to punish genocide are still in force, **Spain** laments that atrocities of the past are yet being repeated. This is why we need to focus on the work of the Council, the OHCHR and civil society in detecting the early warning signs for crimes of atrocity. In light of the attempts to undermine the legitimacy of the Council and referring to skewed interpretations of sovereignty, Spain expresses its commitment to Europe's swift action in avoiding irreparable tragedies. We cannot allow for genocide to occur. In light of our responsibility as a State Party to the 1948 Convention and as a member of the UNHRC, Spain calls for strengthening of accountability mechanisms through the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice.

Despite the landmark creation of the 1948 Convention, **Cyprus** explains that we have collectively failed to live up to our commitment, as the past decades have shown. A genocide, by definition, requires systematic, long-term planning and deliberate implementation. It is an intentional act rather than an accidental occurrence. Recent advancements in digital technologies have facilitated the dissemination of hate speech and discrimination, enabling exclusion and the targeting of specific groups. Precisely because of its dynamic nature, monitoring of such trends needs to be more meticulous and include a more diligent analysis. In order to ensure the prevention of genocide or reduce the risk of its occurrence, it is imperative that we use tools at our disposal. Human rights and fundamental freedoms need to be protected, and commitments need to be implemented in a consistent manner. Justice, equality, accountability and mutual respect must become an integral part of national policies. All governments have an obligation to respect and uphold international law and international human rights law. Now more than ever, it is essential that we do so to ensure a culture of peace and dignity, with human rights at the forefront.

**Costa Rica** shares the panellists' call to strengthen prevention and identification efforts. Costa Rica firmly believes that combating impunity is crucial for preventing genocide. History has shown us that not holding perpetrators to account not only deepens wounds, but also promotes an environment in which serious violations of human rights can lead to genocide. We are facing huge challenges, such as the swift spread of hate speech and misinformation. Divisive narratives in the digital arena compel us to act decisively and to redouble our efforts through these tools. Costa Rica takes its responsibilities seriously in this effort, and hopes to create a place of dialogue and exchange of best practises through various initiatives, such as the Global Action Against Mass Atrocity and Crimes, and the Group of Friends of the R2P. Costa Rica calls for strengthening of early warning mechanisms. It is fundamental to promote an educated and





responsible digital space and to strengthen international cooperation to mitigate risks and strengthen judicial mechanisms. It reaffirms the crucial role of the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court in order to guarantee justice and avoid future atrocities. We appeal to all states to fully cooperate with these institutions and to adhere to their obligations under international law.

As a member state of the 1948 Convention, **Iran** attests great importance to the above-mentioned Convention as an effective international legal instrument for the prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide. Iran firmly believes that impunity is a significant risk factor for genocide, war crime and crime against humanity, and that it is imperative to be addressed by investigation, allegations, persecution and punishment of perpetrators. Iran is of the view that the rule and the construction of an international justice system, in particular ICJ and ICC, is highly important to be held accountable as the perpetrators of this kind of crime. Iran maintains its position on the Zionist regime's heinous crimes, including the mass killing of civilians and forced displacement into our communities, which constitute acts of genocide, war crime and crime against humanity. Such crimes cannot be overlooked. After the ceasefire, accountability and persecution must be pursued.

As a one of the first signatories of the 1948 Convention, **Türkiye** underlines that such a grave crime should never be condoned and permitted again by the international community. Sharing this common goal of humanity, Türkiye affirms that mandate of the UNSG Special Advisor should be immune from any politicisation attempts while carrying out this unique duty. Developing the ability of the international community to recognise the risk of genocide while witnessing attempts to misuse and politicise this very human issue is not an easy task. Analysing the risk factors for genocide is not sufficient. Responsiveness and agility are equally crucial. The unprecedented suffering of the people in Gaza and the lack of immediate response from the international community has shown us that necessary lessons from the past were not taken. Impunity encourages future crimes, therefore punishment of genocide is crucial for the eradication of that crime.

**Iraq** has deep wounds from the genocidal crimes of the deposed regime against the various segments of the Iraqi population. Despite that, Iraq has achieved great advances in preventing such crimes and to ensure that they don't recur, and has developed its legal framework, including the Supreme Court's mandate to look into such crimes. Iraq considers the displacement of the Kurds as a mass crime, and we have worked against Daesh in its persecution of the Yezidis and other minorities. Iraq is willing to continue the efforts to address such crimes through continuing investigations or supporting victims, as well as making provisions for robust early warning systems, and making sure that there are repercussions to the perpetration of such crime. Iraq condemns the genocide perpetrated against the brotherly Palestinian people. It calls for holding the perpetrators accountable and upon the international community to shoulder its legal and ethical responsibility to put an end to such crimes and ensure protections for the brotherly Palestinian people.

**The Maldives** welcomes this important panel discussion on early warning and prevention of genocide, which remains one of the greatest violations of human rights and international law, and its prevention is a collective responsibility that requires early, decisive, and coordinated action. The international community has repeatedly said, never again, yet genocide and other grievous



crimes have continued without accountability, most recently Israel's crimes against humanity. The Maldives reaffirms the importance of the 1948 Convention and underscores the fundamental duty of states to protect the population and people under occupation from genocide through the prevention of incitement to violence. For this reason, in October 2024, the Maldives filed a Declaration of Intervention in the ICJ case of South Africa v. Israel. This declaration focused on the interpretation of provisions related to the incitement and punishment of genocide under the Genocide Convention. The Maldives emphasised its dedication to ensuring that the international legal standards are upheld and that acts of genocide are prevented and punished appropriately. The Maldives remains committed to international cooperation in preventing genocide and protecting human dignity. It urges all states to uphold their obligations under international law and act with urgency to prevent the recurrence of such atrocities.

**Rwanda** welcomes the insights provided by our distinguished panellists, and indeed, the international community must recognise that prevention of genocide requires both early warning mechanisms and a robust legal framework that can prevent mass atrocities before they occur. The 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda stands as a reminder of the horrifying consequences of failing to act timely on early warning signs. Prior to the genocide, there were multiple indicators of rising tensions and violent extremism, including hate speech, political polarisation, and the accumulation of weapons. Unfortunately, even today in our region and globally, we continue to observe the spread of disinformation and misinformation, including on social media platforms aimed at misreading and propagating ethnic discrimination, xenophobia, intolerance, negative stereotyping, and stigmatisation, causing violence and abuse of human rights. Rwanda underscores the need for translating early warning assessments into concrete, coordinated, and timely responses, and enacting Rwanda's punishing hate speech, the crime of genocide, and the genocide denial in order to hold accountable perpetrators and render justice to victims.

#### **Views Expressed by Inter-Governmental Organizations (IGOs)**

'Genocide is so easy to commit because people don't believe it until after it happens.' Quoting Mr. Raphael Lemkin, the father of the word 'genocide', the **European Union** believes that these words sadly remain relevant 80 years after the Genocide Convention. As the world is confronted by increasing violence and mass atrocities around the world, the risks of new genocides still persist. The prevention of genocide and atrocity crimes form an integral part of the EU's policy. Respect for and compliance with international law, including the primary obligation of states to protect their citizens and avoid civilian casualties, is a prerequisite for the effective prevention of atrocities. Genocide is a combination of deliberate and widespread violations of human rights. This is why we need to address all forms of widespread human rights violations immediately and decisively. The Human Rights Council and civil society play an essential role in that regard.

#### **Views Expressed by National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs)**

The **Independent Human Rights Commission of Burundi** explains that following the setting-up in 2014 of the Commission for Truth and Reconciliation, the priority for Burundi is early warning and prevention of genocide. The Constitution of 2018 in Article 25 guarantees the right to life and prohibits attacks on bodily integrity including torture and cruel and degrading treatment and obliges the state to respect its international obligations including the documentation of grave



violations in Article 273. The Criminal Code of Burundi of 2017 punishes grave crimes such as genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity and establishes criminal liability for perpetrators. The Government of Burundi has set up the National Observatory for the prevention and eradication of genocide and war crimes and other crimes against humanity. The Commission recommends that the State increase the budget allocated to the National Observatory for the prevention and eradication of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity to enable it to raise awareness among all of the population to prevent genocide and related crimes.

### Views Expressed by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

**Al-Mezan Centre for Human Rights** stresses that for the past 17 months, the ongoing genocide in Gaza has exposed the international community's failure to uphold these principles. In the first week of Israel's assault on Gaza, it became clear that this was unlike anything we had seen before. All signs were there from the start. Dehumanising reactor, the deliberate targeting of civilians and life-sustaining infrastructure, mass war displacement, and the weaponization of water and food. Israeli officials have publicly uttered dozens of genocidal statements, openly calling for the destruction of Gaza and its people. These were not just words, but declarations of intent. The international community was repeatedly warned, including by three provisional measures ordered by the ICJ. And yet, states not only failed to stop atrocities in Gaza, but many actively enabled them by providing Israel with weapons and political and diplomatic cover. The failure of the former UN Special Advisor on Genocide Prevention to fulfil her mandate must be recognized. We sincerely hope that the next Special Advisor will approach the mandate with the impartiality, urgency, and more clarity that Israel demands. The people of Gaza cannot afford another failure. Finally, while action is not overdue, states can and must still act. On Sunday, Israel deliberately blocked the humanitarian aid to Gaza, proving once again that the genocide against the Palestinian people is far from over. Genocide prevention is not optional. It is an legal and moral duty that does not expire. The time to act is now.

**Conselho Indigenista Missionário (CIMI)** believes that the restrictive interpretation of genocide shaped by political choices has ignored the complexity of non-European cultures, perpetuating patterns of late colonialism. As a result, heinous crimes against Indigenous peoples continue to go unpunished. Governments and sectors of society attack Indigenous territories and ways of life through sophisticated genocidal techniques. It's urgent to recognise that the systematic destruction of an Indigenous people goes beyond physical extermination or what goes on in the perpetrator's mind. It must also include the rupture of their existential foundations. International jurisprudence has already acknowledged that cultural destruction can constitute an international crime and that systematic persecution may amount to genocide. This legal revolution calls for improved access to international justice, a reassessment of states' due diligence mechanisms, and inclusion of Indigenous peoples in a trust prevention discussion through culturally appropriate approaches. The HRC should recommend to the Assembly of States Parties the establishment of a working group on Indigenous peoples to enhance investigative and prosecutorial practises at the ICC and the competent offices develop specific risk factors for Indigenous peoples to integrate the system's early warning mechanisms.

**Institut International pour les Droits et le Développement** stresses that genocide prevention is a fundamental obligation under international law, yet its effectiveness relies on early warning mechanisms, political will, and the application of human rights principles. The ongoing crisis in



Gaza raises grave concerns with mass atrocities, forced displacement, and systematic targeting of civilians. First, early warning indicators in Gaza, the destruction of essential infrastructure, mass civilian casualties, and explicit rhetoric advocating erasure of the entire population align with recognised early warning signs of genocide. The targeting of medical facilities, food supplies, and humanitarian aid further exacerbate the crisis, demanding urgent international response. Second, the role of human rights mechanisms to document violations and to hold perpetrators accountable is indispensable, strengthening independent investigations and referring findings to international courts. Third, obligations to the international community. The failure to act on genocide warnings undermines the international legal framework. The UN, regional bodies, and civil society must exert pressure for an immediate ceasefire and protection of civilians. Prevention of genocide requires immediate economic, diplomatic, and legal measures. Waiting is not an option.

**International Service for Human Rights** strongly agrees that acting promptly on early warning signs can prevent atrocity crimes and that impunity contributes to their further occurrence. In 2022, the CERD Committee issued a landmark decision under its Early Warning and Urgent Action Procedure on the situation in the Uyghur region, referring it to the attention of the UN Office on Genocide Prevention and R2P. The CERD recalled the OCHR's 2022 Xinjiang Report, which found that China may have committed crimes against humanity against Uyghurs and other predominantly Muslim populations. The violations underpinning the commission of atrocities identified by OHCHR continue to be documented by UN bodies. Most recently, in the 2025 ILO report on the application of standards referred to in the High Commissioner's Global Update on Monday. The CERD's referral is the first and so far only referral by a UN treaty body to the UN Joint Office. The absence of follow-up on this substantive precedent and clear early warning sign risks damaging the UN's atrocity prevention architecture. Last week, the Thai authorities deported 40 Uyghurs to China, prompting strong condemnation from the High Commissioner who stated this was a clear violation of international law. Thailand is regarding compelling UN recommendations and evidence solely on the basis of China's assurances that they would incur no harm. Such conduct is not compatible with the obligations of a member of this Council.

The **Centre for Global Non-Killing** takes the Council on a voyage into the peace zone. At the heart of the zone, every person is serene, everything is harmonious, happiness is the motion and well-being the situation. Walking towards the outskirts of the zone, we come across education, value enhancement and prevention zones. Further, we enter the grey zone between peace and violence. This is where warning signs are essential. They point in two directions. With sufficient peacemaking skills, we can bring more people to peace and more peace to the people. We can also walk backwards into the peace zone, enhance the quality of life and show it. Happy people will breed a happy world. The example of accessible peace and well-being are the best prevention ever. When the right to life will be universally realised, it will be naturally protected. The risks of genocidal violence will be nil or almost inexistent. Warning signs will be easily seen and used well. Please be whole in the solution rather than partial to the problem. The future we want is a future free from violence within the peace zone.

Today's topic is of great importance to the **World Jewish Congress**. Tragically, the Jewish People, have endured genocide, with the Holocaust serving as a haunting reminder of the consequences of unchecked hatred. Its aftermath includes the founding of this very organisation, the United



Nations, with the promise of never again. Certain language patterns serve as early warning signs of genocide. The Jewish People have sadly learned that what starts as thoughts become words, and words become action. History has demonstrated that dehumanisation eventually leads to the horrors of genocide. Additionally, the overuse or misapplication of the term genocide in colloquial language risks diluting its gravity and undermining efforts to address actual atrocities. The widespread adoption of technology presents both a challenge and an opportunity. Hateful and inflammatory language can now spread rapidly, but technology also offers powerful tools for identifying and addressing early warning signs of genocide. The World Jewish Congress welcomes advancements that enable the monitoring of genocidal intent and prevention of genocide through the use of technology, so that hatred and intolerance have no place in our future. Although much work remains, to remain true to its ideal, the United Nations needs to increase its capacity without diluting the gravity of the term genocide.

**Global Human Rights Defence (GHRD)** expresses great concern over the ongoing crime of forced organ harvesting in China, particularly targeting Falun Gong practitioners and other persecuted groups. These state-sanctioned atrocities have been occurring since 1999, with victims subjected to involuntary medical tests, blood screenings and organ extractions, after resulting in death. China's organ transplant industry has expanded rapidly, despite the absence of a voluntary organ donation system until 2014. These atrocities have been well documented by survivors and doctor testimonies, whistleblowers and investigative reports, revealing that Falun Gong practitioners are held in detention camps and forced to sign fraudulent consent forms and often subjected to torturous execution for their organs. The Chinese Communist Party systematically conceals and denies these crimes, manipulating transplant data and misleading international institutions. These practises violate fundamental human rights, medical ethics and international law. As per the Genocide Convention, China's targeted persecution of Falun Gong constitutes genocide. GHRT advocates for and urges the UN to enact a strong accountability mechanism, prosecute perpetrators under international law and demand full transparency from China's transplant system. It further calls on governments worldwide to stand by the Falun Gong community by signing the Universal Declaration on Combating and Preventing Forced Organ Harvesting and condemning it.

The **Human Rights Research League** emphasizes that political groups are not covered by the 1948 Convention or, for that matter, by the statutes of the most known international courts and tribunals with jurisdiction over the crime of genocide and hence do not enjoy protection by the Convention. On the other hand, political groups often represent a greater challenge to authoritarian rulers than groups enumerated by the Convention, especially where hegemony and control within a state is based on religious supremacy of the ruling class. In such cases, fatwas have at times been issued to silence political opponents and others that the rulers perceive as threats to their leadership, often by branding these opponents as religious apostates instead of having to confront the political message of critical voices. One such example would be the fatwa issued by Abdullah Khomeini against the PMOI in 1988 and the ensuing killing of thousands of political prisoners solely for adhering to that group. With that as a backdrop, it submits that States, the UNHRC, the Office of the Special Advisor to the UNSG on the Prevention of Genocide, and other international human rights mechanisms also need to look into the functioning and consequences of a fatwa by scrutinising a fatwa's political effect, religious aspect, and legal



impact to determine where applicable whether a fatwa could also constitute genocide in all of its modes of perpetration, genocide by decree.

**Legal Analysis and Research Public Union** explains that for almost 30 years, Armenia engaged with ethnic cleansing, forcing Palestinian and Azerbaijani to flee their homes in both Armenia and the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. This policy of systematic displacement, coupled with war crimes and crimes against humanity, led to immense suffering. One of the most heinous atrocities committed during this period was the Khojaly genocide of February 26, 1992. On that night, the town of Khojaly was attacked by Armenian forces with the assistance of the ex-Soviet regiment. Over 200 innocent Azerbaijani civilians were brutally murdered. During the 44 days war in 2020, the Armenian armed forces once again targeted Azerbaijani civilians with missile attacks on cities such as Ganja, Berda, and Tartar. However, justice finally prevailed. In 2023, Azerbaijan successfully restored its sovereignty over Khojaly through anti-terror measures. Today, we witness the return of Azerbaijani families to their homes, where joyful voices of children can be once again heard.

**Institute for Reporters' Safety and Freedom (IRSF)** explains that throughout history, Azerbaijanis have experienced several tragic events, as well as genocides marked by mass violence and loss of life. One of them is the Khojaly genocide, which happened just 33 years ago in 1992. This genocide took the lives of 613 people, including 106 women, 63 children, and 70 elderly. 1,275 were taken hostage, while the fate of another 150 people remains unknown. The town was razed to the ground. In the course of that tragic night, 487 inhabitants of Khojaly were wounded, including 76 children. Eight families were completely wiped out. 130 children lost one parent, 25 children lost both parents. Of those who perished, 56 were killed with particular cruelty. It was a premeditated act intended to instil fear, cause panic, and lead to widespread displacement by Azerbaijani people. Unfortunately, the policy of systematic ethnic hatred and intolerance toward Azerbaijanis is still in place and may lead to further calamities. Learning from history, preventing the occurrence of such horrible events and putting an end to impunity of criminals are critical for seizing the opportunities emerged for peace in the region at the current post-conflict period. In a sense, preventing the rise of revanchism in Armenia significantly depends on the international community.

**ETI (Əlil Təşkilatları İttifaqı, UDPO)** recalls that on February 26, Azerbaijan commemorated the 33rd anniversary of the Khojaly massacre, a tragic event in which 613 Azerbaijani civilians, including 106 women and 63 children, lost their lives. This painful memory highlights the dire consequences when early warnings of mass violence are ignored. Yes, the United Nations has established mechanisms aimed at preventing such tragedies, including early warning systems that collect and analyse data to identify potential risks, educational initiatives to promote a culture of peace, and policy advocacy to strengthen international responses. Rather than, there are quite many international organisations and communities working on this topic. However, it's a regrettable reality that these mechanisms sometimes prove ineffective. Therefore, it becomes crucial for nations and communities to build internal strength and resilience to protect themselves from such violations. We need to think about how to make these mechanisms truly effective and ensure they bring real results.



## FACTS & FIGURES ON ID PARTICIPATION

**27** State Delegations

**1** Inter-Governmental Organizations

**1** National Human Rights Institution

**11** Non-Governmental Organizations