

# Atrocity Prevention and the UN Human Rights Council's 53<sup>rd</sup> Session

The 53<sup>rd</sup> regular session of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) was held in Geneva between 19 June and 14 July 2023. As the primary international human rights body, the HRC has the capacity to prevent and respond to mass atrocity crimes, as systematic violations and abuses of human rights can be an indicator of potential genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity or ethnic cleansing. The summary below highlights major outcomes and relevant dialogues from the 53<sup>rd</sup> session as they relate to the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), atrocity prevention and populations at risk of atrocity crimes. During the session, Costa Rica and Luxembourg delivered three statements on behalf of the [Group of Friends of R2P](#).

## MASS ATROCITY SITUATIONS AND THE HRC

### RESOLUTIONS

#### *Eritrea*

On 20 June the HRC held an interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur for the situation of human rights in [Eritrea](#), Mohamed Abdelsalam Babiker. During the dialogue, the Special Rapporteur presented a report dated 9 May that covered the period from 23 April 2022 to 24 April 2023 and highlighted the Eritrean government's continued barriers to the ability to participate in public and political life. Violations include the continued arbitrary detention and enforced disappearances of journalists, perceived draft evaders and returned asylum seekers, as well as persecution based on religious beliefs. Special Rapporteur Babiker also detailed the use of national service as a tool for social control, including coercive tactics to garner participation in the military campaign in neighboring [Ethiopia's](#) Tigray region. The Special Rapporteur had also seen no evidence of accountability for the alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity perpetrated by Eritrean forces in Tigray. Despite Eritrea being a member of the HRC, the Special Rapporteur decried the lack of participation by the government with Special Procedures, as well as the government's lack of commitment to upholding the highest standards of human rights.

Following a [joint call](#) by the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect and 34 other non-governmental organizations, on 13 July the HRC adopted a resolution extending the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea with a vote of 18 in favor, 7 against and 21 abstentions. The resolution extended the mandate of the Special Rapporteur for one year and called for an interactive dialogue during the HRC's 55<sup>th</sup> session.

#### *Myanmar (Burma)*

On 21 June the HRC held a panel discussion on “the measures necessary to find durable solutions to the Rohingya crisis and to end human rights violations and abuses against Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in [Myanmar](#).” During the discussion, member states addressed a range of challenges that continue to confront the Rohingya population, including impunity for ongoing persecution and discrimination against those remaining in Myanmar, limited financial support in refugee camps in Bangladesh, and the Myanmar military's proposed repatriation plans. On 6 July the HRC held interactive dialogues with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Tom Andrews. High Commissioner Türk highlighted his latest report on Myanmar, released on 28 June, which focused on the military's systematic denial of humanitarian aid to civilians. The High Commissioner's report documented an “all-encompassing system of military measures” aimed at intentionally blocking humanitarian access, including imposing increasing legal and administrative restrictions on travel, banking, finance, importation and procurement. As part of the HRC's 53<sup>rd</sup> session Special Rapporteur Andrews released a conference room paper on 17 May entitled “The Billion Dollar Death Trade: The International Arms Networks that

Enable Human Rights Violations in Myanmar.” The paper provides a detailed assessment of how the military junta has acquired arms, dual-use goods and raw materials to manufacture weapons since the start of the coup in February 2021 and calls on states to fully enforce measures prohibiting the flow of arms to Myanmar and establish and enforce comprehensive sanctions on the arms networks that are procuring weapons for the Myanmar military.

On 14 July the HRC adopted without a vote a resolution brought forward by members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation on the situation of human rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar. The resolution calls upon the military in Myanmar to confront the root causes of human rights violations and abuses against ethnic minorities, to reverse and repeal policies and practices that marginalize Rohingya Muslims, and create the conditions necessary for the safe, voluntary, dignified and sustainable return of all refugees. However, despite risks related to repatriation raised by High Commissioner Türk and Special Rapporteur Andrews, the resolution still called for Myanmar to “immediately commence the voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable repatriation and subsequent reintegration of all forcibly displaced Rohingya Muslims and other minorities from Bangladesh” and called upon the UN to provide necessary support to expedite the process.

### ***Syria***

On 5 July the HRC held an interactive dialogue on the oral update of the UN Commission of Inquiry (CoI) on [Syria](#). During their update, the CoI highlighted ongoing grave crimes perpetrated against civilians across Syria, including arbitrary arrests, torture, ill-treatment, enforced disappearances and deaths in detention. The CoI also drew attention to the lack of reference to human rights concerns in Syria in the recent decision of the League of Arab States (LAS) to readmit Syria and called on the LAS to make human rights a priority in dialogues with the Syrian government.

On 13 July the HRC adopted a resolution on the situation of human rights in Syria with 24 votes in favor, 4 against and 18 abstentions. The resolution demanded that the Syrian government “meet its responsibility to protect the Syrian population.” The HRC welcomed the decision taken by the UN General Assembly on 29 June to establish the Independent Institution on Missing Persons in the Syrian Arab Republic to clarify the fate and whereabouts of all missing persons in the Syria and provide support to victims, survivors and families. The resolution also reaffirmed the need to end impunity through the prosecution of perpetrators of crimes under national and international law and welcomed the initiation of legal proceedings at the International Court of Justice by Canada and the Netherlands under the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

### ***Ukraine***

On 12 July the HRC held an interactive dialogue with High Commissioner Türk on the situation in [Ukraine](#). The High Commissioner presented a report on the detention of civilians in the context of the Russian invasion of Ukraine from 24 February 2022 to 23 May 2023. The report documented over 900 arbitrary detentions, including 864 perpetrated by the Russian Federation, while stating the number is likely much higher due to lack of access to Russian detention facilities. The High Commissioner documented incommunicado detentions, which were “tantamount to enforced disappearances,” and the summary execution of 77 arbitrarily detained civilians. Over 90 percent of detainees held by the Russian Federation stated they had been subjected to torture and ill-treatment, including sexual violence. The report also documented violations by Ukrainian authorities, including 75 cases of arbitrary detention and the torture and ill-treatment of detainees, including sexual violence.

On 14 July the HRC adopted a resolution on cooperation with and assistance to Ukraine in the field of human rights, with a vote of 28 in favor, 3 against and 16 abstentions. The resolution requested the High Commissioner present an oral update following the release of the reports by his Office (OHCHR) at each concurrent HRC session until its 59<sup>th</sup> session, followed by an interactive dialogue.

## ***ADDITIONAL INTERACTIVE DIALOGUES AND REPORTS***

### ***Afghanistan***

On 19 June the HRC held an enhanced interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in [Afghanistan](#), Richard Bennett, and the UN Working Group on discrimination against women and girls. The Special Rapporteur and the Working Group presented their joint report, published on 15 June, which emphasized that women and girls in Afghanistan are subject to extreme forms of gender-based discrimination that is “unparalleled globally.” According to the report, women and girls endure an oppressive environment, with limited to no ability to

participate in public and daily life, due to restrictive edicts enforced by the Taliban that violate their fundamental rights, including rights to education, work, healthcare, freedom of movement and freedom of opinion and expression. The report found that severe discrimination perpetrated by the Taliban de facto authorities against women and girls may amount to gender persecution, a crime against humanity, and can be characterized as gender apartheid because it appears to be part of a systemic policy with the intent to subject women and girls to total domination. UN Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, Nada Al-Nashif, also spoke during the enhanced interactive dialogue, highlighting the consequences of these severe restrictions and emphasizing that Afghanistan is the only country in the world that bans women from working for international organizations, including the UN.

### **Burundi**

On 6 July the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in [Burundi](#), Fortuné Gaetan Zongo, provided an oral update to the HRC in the context of an interactive dialogue. The Special Rapporteur expressed concerns that despite announcements by the President of Burundi to end systematic human rights violations and abuses, which first escalated in 2015 and [may amount to crimes against humanity](#), the human rights situation remains worrying. The Special Rapporteur warned of monopolization of state power, including control of economic resources, and that the political instrumentalization of state institutions constitutes a key factor that inhibits a return to lasting peace. Intolerance and repression of civil liberties has resulted in the shrinking of civic space, weakening of opposition political parties, self-censorship of the media for fear of reprisals, arbitrary arrests of political opponents and civil society actors, and in opponents, media and civil society organizations who previously fled remaining in exile.

### **Central African Republic**

During an interactive dialogue on 12 July, the Independent Expert on the human rights situation in the [Central African Republic \(CAR\)](#), Yao Agbetse, provided an oral update regarding technical assistance and capacity building in the field of human rights. The Independent Expert reported that the armed group *Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique* has perpetrated regular human rights abuses, including killings, kidnappings, theft, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, rape and sexual violence and unlawful taxes. The Independent Expert highlighted in particular widespread torture, rape and killings committed by Russian bilateral forces and stressed that these forces must cease impeding the freedom of movement of the UN peacekeeping mission in CAR. In recent months, the Independent Expert has received testimony of harassment and physical violence against individuals opposed to the 30 July constitutional referendum and called for these violations to cease. Insecurity continues to be an obstacle to investigations by the Special Criminal Court (SCC) and the efforts of the Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission (CVJRR).

The Independent Expert called on CAR authorities to implement political and legal measures to combat hate speech and outline what steps are being advanced to establish guarantees of non-recurrence. The Independent Expert stressed that CAR authorities need support during its upcoming Universal Periodic Review session in January and February 2024, as well as its review before the Committee on Enforced Disappearances and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The Independent Expert called upon international partners to provide additional support to ensure the UN Mine Action Service has the necessary resources for the effective clearance of mines, as well as to provide resources for reparations funds to strengthen ongoing transitional justice efforts undertaken by the SCC and CVJRR.

### **Iran**

On 6 July the HRC held an interactive dialogue on the oral update of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) on the Islamic Republic of Iran. The FFM raised concerns about ongoing allegations of serious human rights violations in the context of protests that started on 16 September 2022, including arbitrary detentions, harassment of family members seeking justice for those who were killed, and harassment and intimidation of journalists, lawyers and human rights defenders. The FFM provided details on the scope of their mandate, including examination of possible root causes and relevant legal, historical, social and political context, as well as examining allegations of violations affecting women and children, and their impact on those from diverse ethnic, religious or cultural identities. The FFM also called on the government of Iran to fully cooperate with its mandate and reminded the government of its obligation to ensure the enjoyment of human rights of all persons, including women and girls.

### **Nicaragua**

On 21 June Deputy High Commissioner Al-Nashif presented an oral update on the promotion and protection of human rights in [Nicaragua](#). The Deputy High Commissioner warned that since the last update on 3 March 2023, OHCHR has documented serious human rights violations committed by Nicaraguan officials against the backdrop of a steady

deterioration of the overall human rights situation. According to OHCHR, the silencing of critical voices persists in a context of widespread fear and harassment by authorities, leaving almost no space for open and inclusive public debate. New waves of arbitrary deprivations of liberty, including of human rights defenders, political opponents, journalists, members of the peasant movement, and persons linked to the Catholic Church were carried out in recent months. OHCHR also warned that these crimes are routinely carried out by the authorities to criminalize political opponents and the legitimate work of human rights defenders. As a sign of intensifying repression, 119 civil society organizations and eight universities have had their legal personality cancelled since March. During the previous HRC session in March 2023, the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua (GHRE) found that the Nicaraguan government, as well as pro-government groups, have committed crimes against humanity as part of a systematic campaign to “eliminate, by different means, any opposition in the country.” To date, the government of Nicaragua continues to refuse to cooperate with the GHRE, OHCHR and wider UN human rights system.

### ***Occupied Palestinian Territory***

On 20 June the HRC held an interactive dialogue with the independent, international CoI on the [Occupied Palestinian Territory](#), including East Jerusalem, and Israel during which the CoI presented their latest report. The report, issued on 8 June, finds the rights of civil society members are being violated by authorities in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory through harassment, threats, arrests, interrogations, arbitrary detention, torture and inhuman and degrading treatment. The CoI’s report details how the Israeli government has increasingly restricted civic space through a strategy of delegitimizing and silencing civil society, including through criminalizing Palestinian civil society organizations and their members by labeling them as “terrorists,” pressuring and threatening institutions that give a platform for civil society discourse, actively lobbying donors, and implementing measures intended to cut sources of funding and support. The report further finds that the majority of these violations are being committed as part of the Israeli government’s goal of ensuring its permanent occupation at the expense of the rights of the Palestinian people.

On 10 July the HRC held an interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territory. The Special Rapporteur presented her report, dated 9 June, which focuses on arbitrary deprivation of liberty. The report found that widespread and systematic arbitrary deprivation of liberty of Palestinians is a structural component of their subjugation, maintained through a dual legal system, military orders and emergency regulations, routine arrest and detention without charge or trial, and the framing of Palestinians as a collective incarcerable security threat. The Special Rapporteur also emphasized that the occupied Palestinian territory as a whole can be viewed as “a constantly surveilled open-air prison” and that Israel’s occupation must be brought to an end.

### ***Sudan***

On 19 June the HRC held an enhanced interactive dialogue on the situation in Sudan with the High Commissioner and the designated Expert on human rights in Sudan, Radhouane Nouicer. The High Commissioner presented a report covering the human rights situation in Sudan from 11 April 2022 to 14 April 2023. Although the reporting period predated the [intense fighting](#) that erupted in Khartoum between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) on 15 April, in his statement to the HRC High Commissioner Türk focused on the recent developments, condemning “in the strongest terms” the ongoing human rights violations and calling for an end to the “sea of suffering.” He shared his concern about the situation in West Darfur, where violence has “exploded” along ethnic lines. He warned that as result of communication outages OHCHR has been unable to verify the number of people killed and the actual figures are likely significantly higher than what is reported. The High Commissioner emphasized, “this is a human rights and humanitarian crisis that is unfolding at an alarming rate, on a devastating scale and with a complexity not seen before in Sudan.”

The High Commissioner also welcomed the HRC’s decision to strengthen the mandate of the Expert on Sudan to include detailed monitoring and documentation of the human rights situation, including violations arising directly from the current conflict. The Global Centre has joined [numerous calls](#) for the HRC to establish an investigative mechanism, complementary to the mandate of the Expert, to collect, consolidate, analyze and preserve documentation and evidence, and to identify, where possible, those individuals and entities responsible for alleged crimes, among other things.

### ***Venezuela***

The HRC held an interactive dialogue on 5 July, during which the High Commissioner presented his first report on [Venezuela](#) since assuming office. The High Commissioner acknowledged the Venezuelan government’s willingness to engage with OHCHR, including through granting access to a number of civilian and military detention centers. The High Commissioner also welcomed the recent of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Venezuelan

government and the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC). Despite such progress, the High Commissioner expressed concern about continued threats and stigmatization of civil society, restrictions on freedom of expression and opinion and ongoing arbitrary detentions. In his report dated 4 July, the High Commissioner also expressed concern about alleged torture and ill-treatment in detention centers, lack of right to fair trial and the need for broader judicial reforms. The High Commissioner highlighted the need for a transparent, participatory and inclusive electoral process as [leading international civil society organizations](#) have warned about emerging warning signs of increasing government repression ahead of the scheduled elections in 2024 and 2025. The report noted that while available information indicated a reduction in deaths in the context of security operations, fear of reprisals and limited access to areas where incidents have occurred means cases remain underreported. The HRC-mandated FFM on Venezuela [previously found](#) that arbitrary detention, torture and sexual violence, as well as extrajudicial executions are part of a systematic and widespread attack against the civilian population and may amount to crimes against humanity.

## **RELEVANT THEMATIC AREAS**

### ***RESOLUTIONS***

#### ***Human rights and international solidarity***

In his report dated 2 May, the Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity, Obiora Chinedu Okafo, highlighted the importance of international solidarity as a foundational principle in the promotion and protection of human rights globally and emphasized the urgent need for international solidarity in responding to humanitarian crises, conflicts and situations of forced displacement. The report further stressed the importance of providing assistance and protection to those affected by such challenges, including refugees, internally displaced persons and people in vulnerable situations. The report also noted the contradiction when states and scholars who support the principle of R2P tend to argue against the existence of a legally binding international solidarity principle and/or the human right to international solidarity. The Special Rapporteur stressed that embracing international solidarity demands concrete actions and genuine commitment from all and that the international community should “be conceptually consistent.” On 12 July, under the leadership of Cuba, the HRC adopted a resolution to renew the mandate of the Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity for a period of three years. The resolution was adopted by a vote of 31 in favor, 13 against and 3 abstentions.

### ***ADDITIONAL INTERACTIVE DIALOGUES AND REPORTS***

#### ***Casualty recording***

In his report on the impact of casualty recording on the promotion and protection of human rights dated 16 May, the High Commissioner described how casualty recording has effects on protection, compliance with international law, early warning, prevention, accountability, access to services and reparations, among others. In the report, the High Commissioner noted that the Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect (OSAPG) uses casualty records to present evidence-based arguments in its advocacy work on global atrocity prevention and that the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide often does so in public statements and to illustrate risk factors and indicators of atrocity crimes. The High Commissioner also noted the role of civil society in supporting states to meet their obligation to provide reparations to victims of violations of international law. In this regard, he highlighted initiatives in Kosovo, where the Humanitarian Law Centres in Serbia and Kosovo have used their casualty records to assist victims in filing legal complaints at the War Crimes Prosecutor’s Office in Serbia. The High Commissioner also emphasized that the casualty figures of the Human Rights Office of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq were used in press releases and public reports to sound the alarm on the situation in Sinjar following the attack in August 2014, which marked the beginning of the genocide of Yazidis by the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant.

#### ***Freedom of peaceful assembly and association***

In a report dated 19 May, the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Clément Nyaletsossi Voule, examined the gaps in accountability for serious crimes committed against activists and protesters and provided recommendations to end impunity for such crimes to ensure that the fundamental freedoms of peaceful assembly and of association can be effectively exercised. The Special Rapporteur highlighted that in order to implement R2P, the Secretary-General has called on the international community to “consider all legal options and practical steps to ensure justice for all victims and contribute to the prevention of future violations” when states fail to prosecute those responsible for atrocity crimes in their territory. Further, the Special Rapporteur recalled that states



should implement effective accountability measures, including the adoption or amendment of internal legislation, to enable their courts to exercise universal jurisdiction over serious crimes under international law. The Special Rapporteur recalled that in the 2005 World Summit Outcome, Heads of State and Government committed to utilizing regional and subregional arrangements to encourage and help each other to fulfill their primary responsibility to protect. Collaboration is essential so that states can act swiftly to prevent the commission of atrocities when serious violations of the rights of freedom of peaceful assembly and association occur.

The Special Rapporteur stressed that the HRC and its mechanisms play a key role in providing early warning of possible mass atrocity situations and also noted that in the context of violations perpetrated during protests, CoIs should be mandated to investigate the underlying root causes of the repression of protests, as protests and the tendency to suppress them are inevitably connected to legacies of injustice within societies, including entrenched discrimination against marginalized groups.

### ***Prevention of genocide***

On 4 July the HRC held an interactive dialogue with the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Alice Wairimu Nderitu, during which she emphasized the important role of the HRC in responding to situations that are of concern to her mandate. During the interactive dialogue, cross-regional delegations called on the Special Adviser to provide regular early warning analysis and updates on situations of concern to UN member states, including at the HRC. Several delegations also emphasized their support for the mutually reinforcing mandates of the Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and on R2P and highlighted the need to equally prioritize and resource R2P within OSAPG. Australia, Liechtenstein, the United Kingdom and the United States highlighted the referral by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination of its findings on [Xinjiang, China](#) to the OSAPG in November 2022, and called on the Special Adviser to consider follow-up action with regard to the referral.

During the dialogue Special Adviser Nderitu highlighted several country or regional situations of concern, including emerging or protracted conflicts in Syria, [Yemen](#), Ukraine, [Mozambique](#) and [Burkina Faso](#). The Special Adviser warned that in the [Democratic Republic of Congo](#), attacks against civilians along ethnic lines, as well as mass killings, sexual violence, abductions, destruction of property and attacks, including against displacement camps, continue unabated. While lauding the Ethiopian peace agreement, she warned that authorities must strengthen national mechanisms for accountability and implement the recommendations of the HRC-mandated International Commission of Human Rights Experts. The Special Adviser also warned of atrocity risks in Haiti, stressing the threat caused by criminal gangs, governance challenges, a humanitarian emergency and natural disasters, as well as racist, discriminatory and dehumanizing rhetoric and human rights violations targeting people of Haitian descent.

The Special Adviser stressed that there have been serious violations along identity lines in many states, including Afghanistan, [Mali](#), Myanmar, CAR and [South Sudan](#). She expressed concern over tensions manifesting in Bosnia and Herzegovina through deepening mistrust and growing denial of past crimes, in particular the Srebrenica genocide. She also stressed the need for a strong investment in peace and reconciliation amidst growing tensions in Serbia and Kosovo, as well as between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The Special Adviser also highlighted that inter-communal violence and violent extremism continue in the [Central Sahel](#), with civilians facing targeted attacks along ethnic and community lines, ill-treatment, destruction of property, as well as hateful and discriminatory speech. She expressed deep concern over the human rights situation in Papua, Indonesia, including alleged harassment, arbitrary arrests and detention of Papuans and non-recognition of the rights of indigenous Papuans. Following her recent visit to Brazil, the Special Adviser also warned about the situation of indigenous peoples and peoples of African descent, including the impact of mining and excessive use of force against the Yanomami in Roraima State and the Guarani Kaiowa in Mato Grosso do Sul State. The Special Adviser also noted racial profiling and targeting of people of African descent by the police.

The Special Adviser also emphasized grave concern over ongoing fighting between Sudan's military and the RSF. Stressing that these attacks could constitute risk factors for atrocity crimes, she warned that the conflict has the capacity to trigger violence in the entire region, including along ethnic lines. She recalled that in November 2022, her Office had voiced concern regarding the hundreds of civilians killed in inter-communal clashes over land disputes among the Hausa, Funj and Berta ethnic communities of Blue Nile state. The Special Adviser welcomed the ICC Prosecutor's briefing to the UN Security Council on the situation in Darfur as constituting an opportunity to push for accountability.

The Special Adviser also highlighted the report of the Secretary-General, dated 12 July, which focused on the impact of technological advances on genocide prevention efforts, and on the risk of atrocities. The report highlighted measures to build national and regional capacity to prevent genocide and examined the opportunities and challenges of digital technologies for prevention efforts and how to harness the opportunities provided by the digital space to enhance protection efforts.

**ANNEX 1 – Statement by the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect during the Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on violence against and girls, it's causes and consequences**

22 June 2023

Mr. President,

I deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Friends of R2P.

UN experts consistently find that wherever conflicts or crises occur, sexual and gender-based violence continues to shatter lives and communities. While it may amount to an atrocity crime itself, it can also contribute to an enabling environment that facilitates the commission of other atrocity crimes.

To uphold our responsibility to protect, we need to strengthen accountability, including through improving documentation, evidence gathering, data disaggregation and information sharing. Conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence disproportionately affects women and girls, and members of other populations in vulnerable situations. It is important systematically to use a gender-responsive approach when addressing it.

Greater efforts should also be made to address trauma and strengthen accountability in a way that is survivor-centred and avoids causing re-traumatisation. This includes providing access to comprehensive and human rights-based services for survivors, as well as ensuring access to effective remedies.

For each rape reported in connection with a conflict, many more go undocumented, making accountability and justice the rare exception. Therefore, it is imperative to increase efforts to seek accountability, so that the use of sexual and gender-based violence as a tactic of war cannot continue.

Special Rapporteur, the UN Secretary General's report addresses the nexus between preventing atrocity crimes and development. How can the prevention of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence be strengthened through development cooperation?



**ANNEX 2 – Statement by the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect during the Interactive Dialogue on the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on casualty recording**

3 July 2023

Mr. President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Friends of R2P.

We thank the High Commissioner for his report. Casualty recording is vital to preventing and responding to atrocities. Firstly, such disaggregated data can serve as early warning to understand patterns of human rights violations or abuses, including potential targeting of persons belonging to certain groups or communities, and possible motives of perpetrators. This analysis may help inform early action to prevent further escalation.

Casualty data from armed conflicts and situations of violence is directly relevant to how the international community tracks progress on SDG16, a goal which should be a core focus of the New Agenda for Peace.

Secondly, casualty recording can contribute to victim and survivor-centred approaches to justice and accountability. OHCHR guidance shows the utility of casualty recording in the context of humanitarian relief, political processes aimed at ending violence and legislative reform efforts to [ensure better protection and assistance for victims](#), all of which can contribute to structural atrocity prevention efforts.

We encourage the High Commissioner to ensure all relevant OHCHR field presences record, identify, and report periodically on all casualties occurring within their remit, taking into account age, gender and disability dimension.

Mr. High Commissioner,

Given the unique value and impact of casualty recording in situations at risk of, or already experiencing, atrocity crimes, how can it be further mainstreamed and institutionalised across the wider UN human rights system?

Thank you for your attention.

**ANNEX 3 – Statement by the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect during the Interactive Dialogue with the UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide**

4 July 2023

Mr. President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Friends of R2P.

We thank the Special Adviser and would like to reaffirm our support to the UN Office on Genocide Prevention and R2P. The Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide and the Special Adviser on R2P can and should play an instrumental role in raising awareness of situations at risk of atrocity crimes and providing UN Member States with targeted recommendations for action. These complimentary and mutually reinforcing mandates require equal support, including from within the UN system, to ensure their effectiveness.

We urge the two Special Advisers to use their leadership role to seize any opportunity to advance atrocity prevention efforts, including at the HRC and through regular early warning and horizon-scanning briefings to UN Member States on concrete situations at risk. Public statements on situations at imminent risk of escalation can contribute to mobilizing early action.

We also urge the Special Adviser to enhance her collaboration with the OHCHR and relevant HRC mechanisms and procedures in order to promote addressing atrocity prevention holistically across the UN system, as well as to systematically engage with civil society and affected communities.

Special Adviser,

What follow-up action is intended regarding situations where Treaty Bodies and other UN mechanisms specifically refer their analysis and recommendations to your Office?