



Human Rights Council**Fifty-fifth session**

26 February–5 April 2024

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development****Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council
on 3 April 2024****55/13. Prevention of genocide***The Human Rights Council,**Guided by the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, and other relevant international instruments,**Recalling its resolutions 7/25 of 28 March 2008, 22/22 of 22 March 2013, 28/34 of 27 March 2015, 37/26 of 23 March 2018, 43/29 of 22 June 2020 and 49/9 of 31 March 2022 on the prevention of genocide,**Recognizing that in all periods of history genocide has inflicted great losses on humanity,**Reaffirming the significance of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the first human rights treaty adopted by the General Assembly, on 9 December 1948, and succeeded by the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on the next day, as an effective international instrument for the prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide,**Emphasizing that the crime of genocide is recognized in the Convention as an odious scourge and that further international cooperation is required to facilitate the timely prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide,**Deeply concerned about the occurrence in recent history of genocide, recognized as such by the international community, on the basis of and as defined in the Convention, and bearing in mind that massive, serious and systematic violations of human rights and international humanitarian law might result in genocide,**Taking into consideration the fact that States parties to the Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity of 26 November 1968 have agreed that no statutory limitation shall apply to such crimes, including the crime of genocide, irrespective of the date of their commission,**Affirming that impunity for the crime of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity encourages their occurrence and is a fundamental obstacle to the furtherance of cooperation among peoples and the promotion of international peace and security, and that fighting impunity for such crimes is an important factor in their prevention,*

Condemning impunity for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, emphasizing the responsibility of States to comply with their obligations under relevant international instruments to end impunity and, to that end, to thoroughly investigate and prosecute persons responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes or other massive, serious or systematic violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in order to avoid their recurrence and to seek sustainable peace, justice, truth and reconciliation, and in this regard stressing the importance of strengthening the capacity of domestic jurisdictions and inter-State cooperation,

Acknowledging the significant progress made by the international community, including within the United Nations system, in developing relevant mechanisms and practices to prevent and punish the crime of genocide, thereby contributing to the effective implementation of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 96 (I) of 11 December 1946, in which the Assembly declared genocide a crime under international law, and all subsequent resolutions within the United Nations system that have contributed to the establishment and development of the process of prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide, including Assembly resolution 60/1 of 16 September 2005,

Acknowledging with appreciation that genocide is defined among the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, and acknowledging the role of the Court and other relevant international criminal tribunals in helping to increase accountability for the crime of genocide,

Acknowledging the contribution of the International Court of Justice regarding the prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide,

Stressing the importance of the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence to the prevention of genocide, and stressing also that perpetrators of this crime should be held criminally accountable at the national or international level,

Acknowledging the work of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence and its positive impact on the prevention of gross violations of human rights and serious violations of international humanitarian law through a holistic approach to transitional justice,

Acknowledging also the reports of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the right to the truth,¹ and encouraging States to cooperate with the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence,

Encouraging States to promote the ascertainment of the truth by appropriate means as an important element in combating impunity and promoting accountability as part of the prevention of genocide and comprehensive reconciliation,

Recognizing the importance of preserving historic memory, without distortion, relating to gross human rights violations and abuses and serious violations of international humanitarian law through the conservation of archives, oral histories and other forms of evidence relating to those violations,

Recognizing also that an important factor in the prevention of genocide is the identification of the root causes of genocide, as well as early warning signs,

Emphasizing that early warning should be linked to addressing the prevention of genocide,

Expressing deep concern that genocide is typically preceded by widespread and systematic human rights violations and abuses of civil and political rights, as well as of economic, social and cultural rights, often linked to patterns of discrimination against or

¹ E/CN.4/2006/91, A/HRC/5/7, A/HRC/12/19, A/HRC/15/33 and A/HRC/17/21.

exclusion of protected groups, populations or individuals based on their ethnic, racial, national or religious background,

Noting with concern that the crime of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity are often preceded or accompanied by statements by political leaders and public figures that express support for the affirmation of superiority of a race or an ethnic group, dehumanize and demonize persons belonging to minorities, disseminating hostility and prejudice against ethnic, religious or racial groups, or condone or justify violence against them,

Deeply concerned that the misuse of new technologies, in particular social media platforms, can amplify hate speech and contribute to national, ethnical, racial or religious polarization,

Recognizing that gender plays a role in the planning and commission of genocide and the distinct ways it can be planned and perpetrated against women, men, girls and boys, including through acts of sexual and gender-based violence, and the importance that gender analysis has for prevention and accountability measures,

Strongly condemning violence against women and girls, such as murder, rape, including systematic rape, sexual slavery, forced pregnancy and enforced sterilization, and calling for effective measures of accountability and redress where those acts amount to violations of international human rights and humanitarian law,

Strongly condemning also the forcible transfer of children of one national, ethnic, racial or religious group to another group with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group as such,

Recalling the launch of the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech as an effective tool to fight incitement to discrimination, hostility and violence,

Recalling also the Plan of Action for Religious Leaders and Actors to Prevent Incitement to Violence that Could Lead to Atrocity Crimes,

Emphasizing that the presence of an organized, knowledgeable, strong and representative civil society and free, diverse and independent media able to operate freely would significantly reduce the risk of genocide,

Noting with concern that attempts to deny or to justify the crime of genocide as defined in the Convention and established as such under international law may risk undermining the fight against impunity, reconciliation and efforts to prevent genocide,

Expressing deep concern that justification, biased accounts or denial of past instances of genocide may increase the risk of reoccurrence of violence,

Acknowledging the necessity to protect the cultural heritage of persons belonging to minorities from intentional destruction aimed at erasing evidence of their presence as a key factor for preservation of their identity,

Recognizing the importance of fact-based casualty recording initiatives led by State authorities, independent civil society or internationally mandated organizations, and the contribution they can make to the effectiveness of early warning mechanisms, ensuring accountability, truth, justice, reparation, guarantees of non-recurrence and the preservation of historic memory and combating genocide denial and other forms of hate speech,

Reaffirming that all peoples contribute to the diversity and richness of civilizations and cultures, which constitute the common heritage of humankind,

Recognizing that genocide and other mass atrocities are often committed within the context of armed conflict,

Emphasizing that genocide, whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law,

Underlining the fact that, when designing and implementing strategies, policies and measures to address gross human rights violations and serious violations of international

humanitarian law, the specific context of each situation must be taken into account with a view to preventing the recurrence of crises and future violations,

Recalling that the Human Rights Council was mandated by the General Assembly to address situations of violations of human rights, including gross and systematic violations, and to make recommendations thereon, and that it should also promote the effective coordination and mainstreaming of human rights in the United Nations system,

Recognizing the important contribution of the United Nations human rights system to efforts towards preventing situations in which the crime of genocide could be committed,

Reaffirming its full support for the mandate of Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, who acts as, inter alia, an early warning mechanism to prevent potential situations that could result in genocide,

Taking note of the Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes,² developed by the Office of the Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and on the Responsibility to Protect, as one of the tools to assess the risk of genocide in any situation, and encouraging States and regional and subregional organizations to use relevant frameworks, as appropriate, for guidance in their prevention work,

Recalling the presentation of the reports of the Secretary-General submitted to the Human Rights Council on the implementation of the Five-Point Action Plan³ and the activities of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide,⁴ as well as the practice of convening interactive dialogues with the Special Adviser at the sessions of the Council,

Recalling also the 2005 World Summit Outcome,

Acknowledging the important role played by regional and subregional arrangements in the prevention of genocide and response to situations that may lead to genocide, and taking note in this respect of the establishment of the Regional Committee on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, War Crimes, Crimes against Humanity and All Forms of Discrimination by the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and of the establishment of respective national committees by the States members of the Conference, the Latin American Network for Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention, the Genocide Network of the European Union and other national, regional and international initiatives,

Acknowledging also the successful outcome of the regional forums on the prevention of genocide – the first, in Buenos Aires, from 10 to 12 December 2008; the second, in Arusha, from 3 to 5 March 2010; the third, in Bern, from 4 to 6 April 2011; and the fourth, in Phnom Penh, from 28 February to 1 March 2013 – and noting the first international meeting of Global Action against Mass Atrocity Crimes, held in San José from 4 to 6 March 2014, the second, held in Manila from 2 to 4 February 2016, the third, held in Kampala from 23 to 25 May 2018, and the fourth, held online from 15 to 18 November 2021, and acknowledging the Fourth Global Forum against the Crime of Genocide, held in Yerevan on 12 and 13 December 2022, dedicated to the prevention of genocide in the era of new technologies and organized with the support of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide,

Acknowledging further that victims of and others affected by the crime of genocide as defined in the Convention call for a form of memorialization, which plays an important role in the prevention of genocide,

Recalling the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the provisions of Human Rights Council resolution 49/9, with a particular focus on the impact of technological advances on prevention of genocide efforts and on the risks of the perpetration of genocide,⁵

Welcoming the intersessional meeting of the Human Rights Council held in Geneva on 4 December 2023 to mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and to discuss the role of social media

² A/70/741-S/2016/71, annex.

³ E/CN.4/2006/84.

⁴ A/HRC/7/37 and A/HRC/10/30.

⁵ A/HRC/53/45.

platforms and their instrumentalization by those seeking to spread hate leading to real-world discrimination and violence,

1. *Reaffirms* the significance of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide as an effective international instrument for the prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide;

2. *Reiterates* the responsibility of each individual State to protect its population from genocide, which entails the prevention of such a crime, including incitement to it, through appropriate and necessary means;

3. *Reaffirms* that the right to life under article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights is a right from which no derogation is permitted under article 4 of that Covenant, even in public emergencies that threaten the life of the nation, and does not permit derogation from the obligations assumed under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide;

4. *Emphasizes* that impunity is a significant risk factor for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity and that it needs to be addressed by investigating allegations and prosecuting and punishing the perpetrators;

5. *Recognizes* the contribution that the Human Rights Council can make to the prevention of genocide, including through the mandate set out by the General Assembly in paragraph 5 (f) of its resolution 60/251 of 15 March 2006;

6. *Calls upon* all States to fully cooperate to this end with United Nations human rights mechanisms, including the special procedures of the Human Rights Council and the treaty bodies;

7. *Encourages* States to build their capacity to prevent genocide through the development of individual expertise and the creation of appropriate offices within Governments to strengthen work on prevention;

8. *Encourages* States to consider the appointment of focal points on the prevention of genocide who could cooperate and exchange information and best practices among themselves and with the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, relevant United Nations bodies and regional and subregional mechanisms;

9. *Expresses its appreciation* to all States that have ratified or acceded to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, and in particular to the State that has done so since the adoption by the Human Rights Council of its resolution 49/9, namely, Zambia;

10. *Calls upon* States that have not yet ratified or acceded to the Convention to consider doing so as a matter of high priority and, where necessary, to enact national legislation in conformity with the provisions of the Convention;

11. *Stresses* the importance of enhanced international cooperation, including through the United Nations system and regional organizations, aimed at fostering the principles enshrined in the Convention;

12. *Calls upon* all States, in order to deter future occurrences of genocide, to cooperate, including through the United Nations system, in strengthening appropriate collaboration among existing mechanisms that contribute to the early detection and prevention of massive, serious and systematic violations of human rights that, if not halted, could lead to genocide;

13. *Recognizes* the important role of the Secretary-General in contributing to the prompt consideration of cases of early warning or prevention, as mandated by the Security Council in its resolution 1366 (2001) of 30 August 2001, and the functions of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide who, in accordance with her mandate, collects existing information, in particular from within the United Nations system, liaises with the United Nations system on activities for the prevention of genocide and works to enhance the capacity of the United Nations to analyse and manage information relating to genocide or related crimes;

14. *Requests* all Governments to cooperate fully with the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide in the performance of her work, to furnish all relevant information requested and to react promptly to her urgent appeals;

15. *Underlines* the important role of the United Nations human rights system, including that of the Human Rights Council, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and relevant special procedures and treaty bodies in addressing the challenge of collating information on massive, serious and systematic violations of human rights, thereby contributing to a better understanding and early warning of complex situations that might lead to genocide;

16. *Reiterates* the importance of its universal periodic review mechanism, which is an important instrument for advancing human rights, and invites States to include, where appropriate, information on the prevention of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity in their national reports;

17. *Urges* all States to implement accepted universal periodic review recommendations relating to the prevention of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity;

18. *Encourages* the engagement of civil society in the prevention of genocide through concrete means, such as advocacy, monitoring, reporting, education, conflict prevention and resolution and reconciliation initiatives;

19. *Encourages* States to cooperate with relevant United Nations bodies and mechanisms to intensify conflict risk analysis as a significant element in guiding and/or contributing to assessments of the risks of the perpetration of genocide and to identify situations where preventive measures might be necessary;

20. *Encourages* the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to further enhance the systematic exchange of information between their offices and between the Special Adviser and all relevant special procedures, including those concerned with the promotion and protection of human rights of persons belonging to national, ethnic, racial or religious groups, as outlined in article II of the Convention, and to continue collaboration with relevant international, regional and subregional organizations, national human rights institutions and civil society;

21. *Reiterates* the importance, when addressing complex situations that might lead to genocide as defined in the Convention, of a prompt and comprehensive examination of a set of multiple factors, including legal factors and possible warning signs as identified in, inter alia, the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Five-Point Action Plan and the Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes developed by the Office of the Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and on the Responsibility to Protect, such as the existence of groups at risk, the massive, serious and systematic violation of human rights, the resurgence of systematic discrimination and the prevalence of expressions of hate speech targeting persons belonging to national, ethnic, racial or religious groups, especially if they are uttered in the context of an actual or potential outbreak of violence;

22. *Encourages* States, the United Nations system, international and regional organizations and civil society to work closely in supporting the positive contributions of faith-based organizations and religious leaders;

23. *Recognizes* that early warning signs of genocide may also include an increase in serious acts of violence against women and children or the creation of conditions that facilitate acts of sexual violence against those groups, including as a tool of terror, and calls upon States to take the legislative and other measures necessary to protect women and children from all forms of violence;

24. *Reaffirms* that the starvation of civilians as a method of combat is prohibited under international humanitarian law and that it is therefore prohibited to attack, destroy, remove or render useless, for that purpose, objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, such as foodstuffs, agricultural areas for the production of foodstuffs, crops, livestock, drinking water installations and supplies and irrigation works;

25. *Encourages* States to ensure the full enjoyment of cultural rights, to take the measures necessary to prevent the destruction of historic monuments, memorial sites, including in places where crimes or atrocities have been committed, works of art and places of worship that constitute the cultural or spiritual heritage of peoples in the context of genocide prevention;

26. *Urges* States to preserve archives, oral histories and other forms of evidence concerning genocide and serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law to facilitate the sharing and dissemination of knowledge and the investigation of such violations, and to provide victims with access to an effective remedy, in accordance with international law;

27. *Encourages* States to make use of appropriate international and regional forums to address the issue of prevention of genocide, including, inter alia, the annual meetings of regional and thematic organizations and their related human rights machinery dedicated to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention;

28. *Invites* States and regional and subregional organizations to look at examples of best practices for the prevention of genocide developed in other regions, where appropriate, taking into account their specific regional and national circumstances, with the aim of exchanging experiences and good practices in order to strengthen prevention measures, including early warning mechanisms and forms of cooperation;

29. *Encourages* Governments, in cooperation with international and regional organizations and civil society, while promoting human rights education activities, to continue to disseminate knowledge of the principles of the Convention, paying particular attention to the principles of prevention;

30. *Emphasizes* the important role that education, including human rights education and training, can play in genocide prevention, and encourages Governments to promote, as appropriate, educational programmes and projects that contribute to the prevention of genocide;

31. *Notes* the provision of training and technical assistance to States by the United Nations to strengthen early warning mechanisms for the prevention of genocide, and other prevention capacities, and encourages States to consider requesting such assistance, if required;

32. *Invites* States as a preventive measure to provide appropriate ways, which may include the establishment of national days of remembrance of victims of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, that will ensure that such horrendous crimes are never forgotten and will provide an opportunity for everyone to learn lessons from the past and to create a safer future;

33. *Urges* States to continue efforts aimed at the memorialization and remembrance of past genocides as a way to prevent them by educating society;

34. *Invites* States to contribute to the implementation of target 4.7 of the Sustainable Development Goal through teaching and learning about, inter alia, past instances and the consequences of genocide;

35. *Recalls* the adoption by consensus of General Assembly resolution 69/323 on 11 September 2015, in which the Assembly proclaimed 9 December as the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of This Crime;

36. *Invites* States and regional and subregional organizations to observe the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of This Crime with public events that can memorialize and educate, and thereby contribute to preventing the recurrence of genocide and other mass atrocities;

37. *Welcomes* the role that States and international organizations, in particular the United Nations, have played in commemorating past instances of genocide by establishing and observing official days of remembrance;

38. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in collaboration with the Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect and with relevant entities of the United Nations system, Governments and other stakeholders, to help to ensure the success of the observance by the United Nations of the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and the Prevention of This Crime and to assist States, upon request and in compliance with the provisions of resolution 69/323 relating to funding, in organizing activities for the observance of the International Day;

39. *Expresses concern* at the spread of disinformation and misinformation, particularly on social media platforms, which can be designed and implemented so as to mislead, to spread racism, intolerance, xenophobia, negative stereotyping and stigmatization and to violate and abuse human rights;

40. *Invites* the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide to continue to execute the activities under her mandate, including in the follow-up to the present resolution, by providing States with guidance, assistance and follow-up, upon request;

41. *Requests* the Secretary-General to draw up a roster of focal points and networks on the prevention of genocide with updated information from States;

42. *Decides* to convene, at its fifty-eighth session, a panel discussion on early warning and genocide prevention and, to this end, requests the Office of the High Commissioner to liaise with States, relevant United Nations bodies and agencies, the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, the treaty bodies, the special procedures of the Human Rights Council and regional human rights mechanisms, as well as with civil society, including non-governmental organizations, and national human rights institutions and other stakeholders, including academic experts and the private sector, with a view to encouraging their participation at the meeting, and also requests the Office of the High Commissioner to ensure that the panel discussion is accessible to persons with disabilities;

43. *Requests* the Secretary-General to prepare a follow-up report and recommendations based on information provided by States and other stakeholders on the implementation of the provisions of the present resolution, with particular focus on early warning and genocide prevention, and to submit the report to the Human Rights Council at its sixty-second session and to the General Assembly;

44. *Invites* the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide to an interactive dialogue with the Human Rights Council at its fifty-ninth session on the progress made in discharging her duties;

45. *Decides* to continue its consideration of this issue in accordance with its programme of work.

*53rd meeting
3 April 2024*

[Adopted without a vote.]
