Advance edited version

Distr.: General
14 September 2026

Original: English

Advance edited version

Human Rights Council
Sixty-third session
7 September–9 October 2026
Agenda item 3
Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Prevention of genocide

Report of the Secretary-General*

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 55/13, in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to prepare a follow-up report and recommendations based on information provided by States and other stakeholders on the implementation of that resolution, with particular focus on early warning and the prevention of genocide. In the report, the Secretary-General highlights measures undertaken, good practices and recommendations for the prevention of genocide, with a focus on the role of early warning and emphasizing the importance of early action.

* The present report was submitted to the conference services for processing after the deadline for technical reasons beyond the control of the submitting office.

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 55/13, in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to prepare a follow-up report on the implementation of the provisions of that resolution, based on information provided by States and other stakeholders, with particular focus on early warning and the prevention of genocide.

2. For the preparation of the report, the Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect shared a questionnaire with Member States and other stakeholders, requesting information on the implementation of the resolution and on efforts undertaken on early warning for genocide prevention. The information compiled from the submissions received, and from other sources, has been organized around the main themes of the resolution and pertains to efforts to prevent genocide by strengthening capacities at the national, regional and international levels, with particular focus on early warning.

II. Prevention of genocide and early warning for prevention

3. Genocide was first recognized as an international crime by the General Assembly in its resolution 96-I of 11 December 1946. It was codified in the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Genocide Convention). The number of States Parties to the Convention has risen to 154 with the accession of Djibouti in February 2026.[1] In the Pact for the Future, while condemning the impact of armed conflict on civilians, civilian infrastructure and cultural heritage, Member States recalled that genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes are prohibited under international law, reaffirmed their commitment to their obligations under international law and decided to redouble efforts to ensure accountability for these crimes.[2]

4. Despite this, civilians continue to bear the brunt of armed conflicts and crises. In many situations, national, ethnic, racial or religious identities are instrumentalized to pit one group against another and to fuel discrimination, exclusion, hate speech, incitement to violence and violence itself. Such patterns, particularly when tolerated, condoned or amplified by the authorities or influential actors, may increase the risk of the commission of genocide and other atrocity crimes. Those dynamics serve to underscore the importance of effective early warning systems and timely preventive action.

5. For the purposes of this report, early warning for the prevention of genocide refers to the continuous process of collecting, assessing, analysing and communicating information on risk factors, indicators and potential triggers to enable timely preventive action.[3]

6. The 2014 Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes (the Framework of Analysis) provides a common methodology for early warning and risk assessment for atrocity crimes, and includes specific risk factors for the crime of genocide.[4] While the risk of genocide is significantly higher in situations of armed conflict or crises, genocide is a crime under international law whether committed during peacetime or during war.[5] Risk assessment for early warning and prevention should therefore be undertaken continuously and across all contexts. Even where no imminent concern is present, all States can take measures to strengthen resilience, address structural risk factors and prevent escalation that could potentially lead to the commission of the crime in the medium or long-term.

7. Many submissions received for the preparation of this report emphasized the importance of such continuous early warning assessment, including through the monitoring

[1] See https://treaties.un.org/Pages/showDetails.aspx?objid=0800000280027fac.

[2] Pact for the Future, action 14.

[3] Early warning for the prevention of genocide is closely interlinked with early warning for crimes against humanity and war crimes, as many risk factors are common to all atrocity crimes. While this report focuses on early warning for the prevention of genocide, its recommendations apply to broader atrocity prevention efforts.

[4] A/70/741-S/2016/71, annex.

[5] Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, art. I.

Advance edited version

of identity-based threats, discrimination, hate speech, incitement to violence and other indicators of risk. Several submissions also underscored the growing relevance of data-driven risk assessment and early warning mechanisms.

III. Strengthening capacities for early warning and the prevention of genocide

8. Effective prevention requires institutionalized capacities for risk assessment, early warning, early action and response at the national, regional and international levels to identify and address foreseeable risks at the earliest stage.

A. National measures and capacities for early warning and the prevention of genocide

1. Institutional capacities

(a) Legal and policy framework

9. The duty to prevent and punish genocide is well established under international law and it is a duty that lies primarily with States. The obligation to prevent and punish genocide is established in the Genocide Convention.[6] The International Court of Justice has on numerous occasions determined that the principles of the Convention are part of general customary law and that the prohibition of genocide is a peremptory norm of international law.[7] It has further held that the obligations under the Convention are obligations *erga omnes partes* and that all Parties have a common interest to ensure the prevention, suppression and punishment of genocide by committing themselves to fulfilling the obligations arising from the Convention.[8]

10. While several States have criminalized genocide in domestic law in accordance with the Genocide Convention, fewer have adopted legislative, policy and institutional frameworks specifically aimed at fulfilling the obligation to prevent genocide. Such frameworks can support regular risk assessment, early warning, inter-institutional coordination, preventive action, sustained political commitment and budgetary allocation. States should adopt comprehensive prevention frameworks alongside legislation criminalizing genocide and other atrocity crimes.

11. Comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation is also an important preventive measure, as genocide is often preceded by prolonged patterns of discrimination, exclusion and segregation targeting national, ethnic, racial or religious groups. States should ensure that domestic legal frameworks prohibit discrimination on these grounds, and safeguard all groups protected under international human rights law. Guidance on the protection of minority rights issued by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in 2022 provides useful recommendations in this regard.[9] This should form part of broader efforts to build and sustain State structures and institutions that are inclusive and ensure respect for human rights and the rule of law.

(b) National early warning mechanisms

12. National early warning mechanisms are among the most effective tools available for genocide prevention. They can enable regular risk assessments, facilitate communication of

[6] Ibid.

[7] For example, *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Croatia v. Serbia), Judgment, I.C.J. Reports 2015*, p. 3, at paras. 87 and 88.

[8] For example, *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (The Gambia v Myanmar), Preliminary Objections, Judgment, I.C.J. Reports 2022*, p. 477, at para. 107.

[9] OHCHR and Equal Rights Trust, *Protecting Minority Rights – A Practical Guide to Developing Comprehensive Anti-Discrimination Legislation* (2022).

Advance edited version

concerns to decision makers and support the development of timely prevention action and responses. This underlies the importance of formulating national legislation or policy frameworks.

13. Under the auspices of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and with the support of the Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, some countries in Africa have established national mechanisms for genocide and atrocity crimes prevention, the most recent being Zambia in March 2024. The Office supported the revitalization of the Uganda National Committee in September 2025, the Regional Committee of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region in November 2025 and the National Committee of the United Republic of Tanzania in March 2026. While underfunding remains a common challenge for the full operationalization of these mechanisms, recent efforts to strengthen institutional capacities of existing regional and national committees of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region constitute an important example of positive preventive action.

14. States with active atrocity prevention measures include Australia, Canada, Germany, Rwanda, Timor-Leste, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. Other States have early warning and response structures for conflict prevention and human rights protection that can support genocide prevention efforts. In Colombia, the ombudsperson has a mandate to raise alerts concerning threats to fundamental rights and international humanitarian law. In the Republic of Moldova, specialized commissions help coordinate and monitor implementation of international obligations on non-discrimination and the protection of minorities. In Sierra Leone, there are national early warning and response mechanisms for conflict prevention. Cambodia has institutions that support genocide prevention through community-based early warning and response systems. Several States reported that their national human rights institutions monitor indicators of risk, including hate speech and discrimination. Such initiatives contribute to the structural prevention of genocide and other atrocity crimes.

15. All States should consider establishing early warning mechanisms for genocide prevention, either as stand-alone mechanisms or by integrating this function into existing mechanisms for conflict prevention, national human rights institutions, equality bodies or ombudsperson institutions. Where such functions are integrated into existing mechanisms, the mandate to conduct risk assessment for genocide and atrocity crimes prevention should be explicit and supported by specialized training, adequate resources and clear reporting lines.

16. The format of and the approach taken by such early warning mechanisms should be adapted to the specific context, based on good practice and on an assessment of risk factors. In situations of ongoing conflict or crisis, in countries emerging from conflict or in contexts where genocide or other atrocity crimes have previously occurred, more robust mechanisms may be required, with continuous assessment, rapid alert functions and the capacity to trigger timely action by relevant national actors, supported and complemented by regional and international mechanisms. In other contexts, early warning mechanisms may focus on identifying and addressing structural risk factors, including discrimination, exclusion, hate speech, minority rights concerns and other conditions that may undermine social cohesion and resilience.

17. Effective mechanisms should include a clear legal mandate, trained personnel, agreed indicators, reliable information sources, protection safeguards for affected communities and civil society actors, direct reporting lines to decision makers and procedures for follow-up action. Early warning mechanisms should also ensure the meaningful participation of civil society and communities at risk, while ensuring that such participation does not expose them to harm.

18. New technologies provide important opportunities for data-driven and evidence-based risk assessment, including through the use of tools that monitor online hate speech and identify patterns of identity-based incitement to hostility, discrimination or violence. When assessed together with offline incidents and contextual analysis, such tools can support earlier identification of risks and inform preventive responses. Their use must be grounded in

Advance edited version

international human rights law and standards, accompanied by human rights due diligence and safeguards regarding privacy, data protection, bias, transparency, accountability and the prevention of misuse.

19. Early warning can only be as effective as the action taken in response to it. Early warning alerts from national, regional or international mechanisms, including alerts by the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, should be acted on swiftly. Oversight and accountability at the national level may ensure that action is taken on recommendations. For example, such responsibilities may form part of parliamentary oversight mechanisms.[10]

(c) National prevention strategies

20. National prevention strategies can provide a structured framework for action to respond to early warning alerts and risks identified. Such strategies should be inclusive, context-specific and supported by clear responsibilities, implementation arrangements, resources, oversight and accountability. In the Pact for the Future, Member States decided to comprehensively address the drivers and root causes of armed conflict, violence and instability and their consequences and recognized that they bear the primary responsibility for preventing conflict and building peace, and that national efforts to build and sustain peace contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security. In this regard, inter alia, they decided to strengthen and implement existing national prevention strategies or develop such strategies where none exist, on a voluntary basis and in line with national priorities.[11] The following section outlines tools that may be used to assess risks related to genocide and other atrocity crimes in the development of such strategies, including the Framework of Analysis.

2. Building inclusive and resilient societies

(a) Education and professional training

21. Integrating education on genocide, its risk factors and consequences into formal and non-formal education is an important component of prevention. Previous reports to the Human Rights Council on this topic have provided recommendations on integrating genocide prevention into education.[12] For early warning purposes, it is particularly important that military, police, legal advisers, public officials and other relevant actors are trained to recognize risk factors and to integrate an atrocity prevention lens into their work.

22. Several submissions made for this report highlighted the important role of education in prevention. Many States are undertaking efforts to implement target 7 of Sustainable Development Goal 4, on education for sustainable development and global citizenship, through civic education and improving soft skills, especially when engaging with information and content online. Some States also highlighted education programmes for Holocaust remembrance and on combating racism, antisemitism, xenophobia and other forms of discrimination. Others noted specific initiatives to train personnel, including military and police personnel. Submissions also reflected the important work of civil society in education and awareness-raising and the need to ensure intergenerational education, particularly in societies where atrocity crimes have occurred.

(b) Civic space and civil society participation

23. Civil society, in all its diverse forms, plays a crucial role in the prevention of genocide. Civil society actors are often among the first to identify, document and raise concerns about discrimination, exclusion, hate speech, incitement to violence, targeted violence and other

[10] In one example, in June 2026, the House of Lords in the United Kingdom held a debate on combating atrocity crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, looking at the country's response to genocide and atrocity crimes globally: see https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2026-06-04/debates/D9B5B083-5625-46E5-9788-E14F9E75E0BB/CombatingAtrocityCrimesCrimesAgainstHumanityAndGenocide.

[11] Pact for the Future, action 18.

[12] A/HRC/41/24.

Advance edited version

warning signs that may indicate escalating risks. Independent media report on violations and give visibility to affected communities where others may be unable or unwilling to do so, often at great risk.

24. An enabling environment for civil society is crucial for genocide prevention. States should protect civic space and ensure respect for international human rights and fundamental freedoms. Human rights defenders, journalists and religious, traditional and community leaders who raise concerns about emerging risks should be able to do so safely and without fear of intimidation, reprisal or other forms of retaliation.

25. Several submissions highlighted positive examples of cooperation between governments and civil society organizations in support of social cohesion, interfaith dialogue, human rights monitoring and community-based prevention initiatives. States should further institutionalize such partnerships as part of national prevention and early warning frameworks.

(c) Inclusion and protection of communities at risk

26. Genocide is a crime based on identity. Early warning and prevention of genocide therefore go hand in hand with protection against racial discrimination, protection of national, racial, religious and ethnic minorities and the guarantee of non-discrimination as a baseline of prevention. Promoting inclusive societies where the vulnerabilities of specific communities are understood and addressed is critical to building resilience against genocide. Effective implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 16, as well as the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, could provide a framework for such action.

27. Data are needed to understand the specific impact of conflict and violence on ethnic, religious, racial and national minorities and Indigenous Peoples, including the particular vulnerabilities they may face. The request of the Security Council, in resolution 2686 (2023), that United Nations peace operations monitor and include data on hate speech, racism and extremism that negatively affect peace and security in their reporting to the Council has led to a better understanding of such dynamics in peacekeeping mission contexts.

3. Addressing specific risk factors and potential triggers

28. The Framework of Analysis identifies a range of common and specific risk factors for genocide, including hate speech, incitement to violence, discrimination and the targeting of protected groups through exclusion, segregation, dehumanization and other forms of marginalization, as well as sexual and gender-based violence, violations affecting children and attacks on cultural heritage. Early warning for genocide prevention requires specific vigilance against such trends and early action to prevent and mitigate them.

(a) Hate speech and incitement to violence

29. Hate speech, including incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence and public and direct incitement to commit genocide, can be both an indicator of risk and a potential trigger of genocide. Hate speech may also be manifested in the form of genocide denial and distortion. Monitoring and responding to hate speech, in line with international human rights law and standards, should therefore form an integral part of early warning and early action systems.

30. Hate speech is increasingly being used to promote exclusion, dehumanization and violence against national, ethnic, racial and religious groups.[13] These dynamics are particularly concerning where they are widespread, tolerated by the authorities, amplified through political discourse or linked to patterns of discrimination and violence.

31. Digital technologies have increased the speed and reach of hate speech, the impact of which was highlighted in a previous report on this topic.[14] The growing availability of

[13] See https://www.un.org/en/genocide-prevention/hate-speech/strategy-plan-action; and A/HRC/53/45.
[14] A/HRC/53/45.

Advance edited version

artificial intelligence tools has enabled the rapid creation and dissemination of hateful and discriminatory content at an unprecedented scale. Understanding and countering online hate speech trends is an important component of modern early warning systems.

32. The United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech provides a framework for action to address and counter hate speech.[15] It is complemented by the United Nations Global Principles for Information Integrity,[16] which provide a road map for a safer and more ethical information ecosystem. The Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, as United Nations focal point and Chair of the Working Group on Hate Speech, continues to coordinate and support national efforts to address and counter hate speech in line with international human rights law and standards.

33. Several United Nations entities, regional organizations and civil society actors have developed methodologies and tools to monitor hate speech.[17] In 2025, the Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect published guidance on monitoring online hate speech.[18] The Office also continues to support national authorities, United Nations country teams and regional organizations, on request, in implementing the Strategy and Plan of Action, including through the establishment of national and context-specific plans of action on hate speech.

34. Addressing hate speech requires a comprehensive approach grounded in international human rights law and standards. Effective responses may include monitoring and early warning, public information campaigns, the strengthening of media and digital literacy, the provision of support for independent media, the protection of targeted communities, interfaith and intercultural dialogue and the guarantee of accountability for incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence that is prohibited under international law. The Rabat Plan of Action provides comprehensive guidance for ensuring that legislative measures to address incitement are in line with international human rights law and standards.[19]

35. Recognizing the important role of religious, traditional and Indigenous leaders in countering hate speech and preventing atrocity crimes, in 2026, the Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect published the Muscat Plan of Action for Traditional and Indigenous Leaders and Peoples in Countering and Addressing Hate Speech and Preventing Genocide and Other Atrocity Crimes and their Incitement through Peace Mediation.[20]

(b) Discrimination, exclusion and segregation

36. Discrimination and exclusion that target groups protected under the Genocide Convention are important indicators of the risk of genocide and should form part of risk assessment and early warning. Such patterns may be reflected in laws, policies, administrative practices, political discourse, the denial of citizenship or documentation, restrictions on movement and residence, unequal access to services, segregation or other measures that stigmatize or marginalize protected groups. Unaddressed, such patterns can create conditions conducive to identity-based violence and, in the most serious cases, genocide.

[15] See https://www.un.org/en/genocide-prevention/hate-speech/strategy-plan-action.

[16] See https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4052524?v=pdf.

[17] For example, https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/information-integrity-and-harmful-information; https://stories.undp.org/hate-speech-in-the-age-of-ai; and https://un-dco.org/stories/countering-hate-building-trust.

[18] Comprehensive Methodology for Monitoring Social Media to Address and Counter Online Hate Speech (2024). A pilot of the methodology in 2025 found that utilizing social listening tools to monitor and analyse social media in real time during pre-crisis situations could enhance early warning.

[19] Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence (A/HRC/22/17/Add.4, appendix).

[20] The Muscat Plan of Action (2026) developed through global consultations with the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers and Oman.

Advance edited version

(c) Marginalized groups, sexual and gender-based violence and violations affecting children

37. Early warning for genocide prevention should consider the ways in which genocide and other atrocity crimes may have differentiated impacts on women and girls, men and boys, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) persons, children and persons with disabilities, including where they are targeted because they belong to a national, ethnic, racial or religious group. The Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect has developed specific guidance on the impact and role of women[21] and persons with disabilities[22] in the prevention of atrocity crimes.

38. Resort to rape and sexual violence in conflict continues to be prevalent.[23] Rape and other forms of sexual violence may constitute acts of genocide if committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a protected group, as such.[24] Patterns of sexual violence targeting persons because they belong to a protected group may therefore constitute an important warning sign and should prompt urgent preventive action. The United Nations reported over 9,300 cases of sexual violence in 2025.[25] These figures likely reflect vast underreporting. Sexual violence, including rape, gang rape, sexual slavery and forced marriage and pregnancies, continues to be used as a tactic of war. In 2025, women and girls represented some 95 per cent of victims of the incidents documented by the United Nations. Men and boys were subjected to rape, genital mutilation and other forms of sexual torture, particularly in detention.[26]

39. The impact of genocide and other atrocity crimes on children is particularly devastating. Under the Genocide Convention, the forcible transfer of children from one protected group to another group, where committed with the requisite intent, may constitute an act of genocide (Genocide Convention, art. II (e)). Sexual violence against children also continues to be widespread.[27] Conflict-related sexual violence may also have specific and long-lasting consequences for children, including children born of rape, children subjected to sexual violence and children separated from their families or communities. Such violations may constitute relevant warning signs when linked to the targeting of a national, ethnic, racial or religious group.

40. Several States reported having legislation or policy frameworks for the protection of women and children against violence, including specific crimes such as trafficking in persons. Submissions also referred to Security Council resolution 2467 (2019), which recognizes the specific needs and rights of children born of rape in conflict, which has supported national-level work on these issues.

(d) Attacks on cultural heritage

41. Attacks on cultural heritage are identified as a risk indicator for atrocity crimes in the Framework of Analysis. The persistent targeting of cultural heritage sites associated with a protected group may constitute an early warning sign for genocide, particularly where such attacks are accompanied by hate speech, discrimination, forced displacement, the denial of identity or identity-based violence.

---

[21] Napoli Plan of Action for Women in Communities to Counter Hate Speech and Prevent Incitement to Violence that Could Lead to Genocide and Related Crimes (War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity) (2022).

[22] Guidance Note on Persons with Disabilities and Prevention of Genocide, War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity (2024).

[23] S/2026/321.

[24] International Criminal Court, Office of the Prosecutor, *Policy on Gender-based Crimes: Crimes involving Sexual, Reproductive and Other Gender-based Violence* (2023). Available from https://www.icc-cpi.int/sites/default/files/2023-12/2023-policy-gender-en-web.pdf.

[25] S/2026/390, para. 32. Cases reported are from Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, Mozambique, Myanmar, Somalia, South Sudan, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine, Yemen, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and elsewhere. See also S/2026/321.

[26] S/2026/390, para. 32.

[27] Ibid.

Advance edited version

42. In submissions, several States noted being Party to the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and the 1954 and 1999 Protocols thereto, and the Convention for the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage Convention.

43. Some submissions contained reference to specific projects aimed at protecting cultural heritage in situations of ongoing armed conflict. Others noted measures to integrate cultural property protection into military planning and operations. It is essential that such considerations are further advanced and implemented by the largest possible number of Member States as prevention measures.

4. Accountability and non-recurrence

(a) Accountability

44. Accountability, including reparations for victims, is a central component of genocide prevention. Investigations, prosecutions and broader transitional justice measures, including security and justice sector reform, can deter future violations, combat impunity, acknowledge victims' experiences, provide redress and contribute to guarantees of non-recurrence.[28] Independent and effective justice systems, with civilian oversight, also have an important role in holding accountable perpetrators of systematic violations that may otherwise escalate into genocide and other atrocity crimes. Since the last report on this topic,[29] there have been new cases of genocide adjudicated by national courts. A Swedish appeals court upheld the conviction of Swedish national who joined Da'esh in the Syrian Arab Republic and was found guilty of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes committed against nine Yazidi victims, marking the first national conviction for genocide through forcible transfer of children from one group to another.[30] In its submission, Bosnia and Herzegovina reported that proceedings are pending under new indictments filed for aiding and abetting the genocide in Srebrenica.

45. Several Member States noted the development of specific guidance and training for competent national bodies to investigate genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity; some States have established specialized investigative units. At the regional level, cooperation bodies such as the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation (Eurojust) and the European Network for investigation and prosecution of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes (Genocide Prosecution Network) allow for collaboration and support among those conducting investigations and prosecutors.

46. National accountability efforts are complemented by regional and international institutions and efforts, including, when applicable, resort to the International Criminal Court and accountability mechanisms established by the United Nations. In some submissions, the establishment of cooperation agreements with the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011 was noted. Submissions also referenced the provision of support for open-source intelligence monitoring and the documentation of human rights violations in several countries aimed at advancing accountability.

47. Some Member States have instituted proceedings before the International Court of Justice under the Genocide Convention. In some of these cases, the Court has issued orders indicating provisional measures, including to take all steps to prevent the commission of acts within the scope of article II of the Convention to prevent public and direct incitement to genocide, prevent destruction and preserve evidence of allegations of acts of genocide.

[28] Guidance note of the Secretary-General, Transitional justice: a strategic tool for people, prevention and peace.

[29] A/HRC/53/45.

[30] See https://www.eurojust.europa.eu/news/final-swedish-judgment-12-years-imprisonment-first-ever-case-against-genocide-through-transfer-children.

Advance edited version

(b) Archives, memorialization and education

48. Several Member States reported initiatives to archive material and evidence related to past genocide and other atrocity crimes, including through memorialization projects. Countries that have experienced genocide and other atrocity crimes and that are implementing such initiatives have a wealth of knowledge and experience that can be shared more widely. For instance, the Srebrenica Memorial Center in Bosnia and Herzegovina has implemented an extensive programme for collecting testimonies, through which over 1,000 oral history accounts have been recorded. These testimonies provide an important archival resource for historical and academic research, as well as for outreach and education. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, digital tools such as QR codes placed in locations across the country by civil society also enable wider audiences to access testimonials and information on past crimes. In Cambodia, the Residual Mechanism for the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia has created a wealth of education and interactive outreach material on the crimes committed during the Khmer Rouge period.[31]

49. National and international initiatives to commemorate international days, such as the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust, the International Day of Reflection on the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, the International Day of Reflection and Commemoration of the 1995 Genocide in Srebrenica and the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime emphasize the importance of honouring victims and preserving their memory for prevention. States also highlighted other commemorative days of significance in their national contexts, dedicated to remembrance, education and outreach.

50. However, many submissions noted concern over denial of past instances of genocide and other atrocity crimes, as well as revisionist narratives and hate speech that pose a challenge to ongoing memorialization efforts.

B. Regional and international initiatives

51. Regional mechanisms play an important role in early warning and genocide prevention. Their proximity to the situations of concern gives them a nuanced understanding of the political, social and historical factors driving risk. Additionally, their access to national and regional actors allows them to support prevention efforts, encourage timely action and strengthen national capacities to address emerging threats before they escalate. This includes through preventive diplomacy, mediation and other forms of early action. Existing regional early warning systems can contribute to genocide prevention by integrating risk factors and indicators from the Framework of Analysis into monitoring, analysis and response tools.

52. The African Continental Early Warning System provides real-time alerts of emerging crises, including on risk factors for atrocity crimes from the Framework of Analysis, and the Panel of the Wise engages in preventive diplomacy and mediation under the auspices of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. In addition, the African Peer Review Mechanism works to strengthen early warning by identifying risks related to political instability, human rights violations and ethnic tensions.[32]

53. The European Union has developed tools and internal capacities for early warning, primarily as part of its external engagement.[33] The Council of Europe Commissioner on Human Rights may bring to the attention of member States of the Council deteriorating human rights situations and make recommendations.[34] The Office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe support States in promoting democracy,

[31] See https://www.eccc.gov.kh/en.
[32] African Group statement to Human Rights Council panel discussion, 5 March 2025 (see https://webtv.un.org/en/asset/k1g/k1gfcuqbix).
[33] European External Action Service, EU Responsibility to Protect - Atrocity Prevention Toolkit (2018).
[34] See https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/the-commissioner/mandate.

Advance edited version

the rule of law, human rights and non-discrimination. They can conduct investigations and support preventive diplomacy in response to ethnic tensions that may lead to violence.[35]

54. The Organization of American States has developed its own framework under the principle of the responsibility to protect.[36]

1. Regional human rights mechanisms, mediation and preventive diplomacy

55. Regional human rights mechanisms, such as networks of national human rights institutions and regional human rights courts and commissions, also play an important role in early warning and the prevention of genocide. Their decisions can ensure accountability for serious human rights violations, provide redress to victims and deter systematic human rights violations from escalating into more serious concerns.

56. In 2024, the African Union appointed its first Special Envoy on the Prevention of Genocide and Other Mass Atrocities. The Envoy advances prevention efforts within the region, in cooperation with national and international stakeholders. The African Union Peace and Security Council and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights have also established fact-finding missions and commissions to investigate specific situations.[37] Regional organizations should consider reviewing their mechanisms to ensure integration of early warning for genocide prevention or establish such mandates through new mechanisms.

2. Civil society initiatives

57. Civil society plays a pivotal role in early warning for the prevention of genocide. At national, regional and international levels, civil society organizations contribute to the development of early warning tools, including statistical risk assessments and early warning tools for conflict prevention, which provide important datasets that can be utilized for assessing the risk of atrocity crimes.[38] In recent years, civil society has also been instrumental in advancing the use of innovative data-driven solutions for risk analysis and early warning.[39]

58. Civil society organizations further support prevention efforts through documentation, advocacy, information-sharing, capacity-building and cooperation, complementing the efforts of States, regional organizations and the United Nations and contributing to a broader architecture for early warning and prevention. Such efforts should be supported. Incidents where civil society has faced restrictions or being shut down because of its work are concerning.[40]

C. Contribution of the United Nations system to genocide prevention

1. United Nations early warning

59. Security Council resolution 2686 (2023) encourages peacekeeping missions, in their mandate to protect civilians, to monitor hate speech trends as it impacts peace and security in their mandated areas.

[35] See https://hcnm.osce.org/; and https://odihr.osce.org/.

[36] Organization of American States, General Secretariat, *The Responsibility to Protect and the Organization of American States: A Path Forward for Atrocity Prevention and Response in the Americas* (2022).

[37] For example, in 2024 a fact-finding mission was established for the Sudan (https://achpr.au.int/en/adopted-resolutions/achprres590-lxxx-2024-resolution-achprres590-lxxx-2024-joint-fact-finding).

[38] Uppsala Conflict Data Program (https://ucdp.uu.se/); Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (https://acleddata.com/); and, at the regional level, West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (https://wanep.org/wanep/early-warning-response/).

[39] See https://earlywarningproject.ushmm.org/how-to-use-our-statistical-risk-assessments.

[40] For example, Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation of human rights in the Sudan (A/HRC/61/24, chap. VI); Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression (A/79/319); and Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar (A/80/490, para. 24).

Advance edited version

60. Within the United Nations system, the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide and the Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect play a central role in supporting early warning for genocide prevention through risk assessment, analysis, advice and engagement with relevant United Nations entities, Member States and other stakeholders. The Office uses its risk assessment and analysis, based on the Framework of Analysis, to provide early warning on situations at risk both within the United Nations system and with other actors and partners. The Framework of Analysis and the training and capacity development provided by the Office on this tool have ensured a common framework and methodology for risk assessment across the United Nations system.

61. At the country level, the Office is supporting resident coordinator offices and United Nations country teams in integrating broader prevention assessments, including countering hate speech, into their analysis and programming, aligned with the Framework of Analysis.

62. OHCHR, through its monitoring mandate, expresses concern over deteriorating human rights situations that may present a risk of genocide, emphasizing States' obligations under international law, including the Genocide Convention.[41]

63. The development of new technologies has created opportunities to strengthen data-driven early warning. Several United Nations tools and initiatives, including crisis risk dashboards, risk anticipation platforms, peace operations information systems, arms-flow monitoring tools and human rights data platforms, can provide information relevant to the assessment of the risk of genocide and atrocity crimes.[42] These tools may help identify patterns related to hate speech, identity-based violence, conflict dynamics, arms flows, sexual violence, civilian harm and other indicators of risk.

64. One course for strengthening early action and prevention is to enhance evidence-based and data-driven early warning tools for genocide prevention, building on existing initiatives and the wealth of information that exists at community, national, regional and international levels. Artificial intelligence provides the opportunity to scale up such initiatives at speeds not previously possible.

65. The previous report on this topic looked at the role of new technologies in supporting genocide prevention efforts, as well as the challenges they present.[43] Data-driven solutions, including the use of artificial intelligence, should ensure a human rights-based approach and should not replace community-led early warning and prevention; rather, they should work in symbiosis, complementing each other.

2. Human Rights Council mechanisms

66. The Human Rights Council remains a key partner in early warning for the prevention of genocide. Through its mechanisms, the Council has a plethora of tools to raise the alarm on situations of concern. Special procedure mandate holders have on occasion raised the

[41] For example, OHCHR, "Six-month update report on the human rights situation in Gaza: 1 November 2023 to 30 April 2024", available at https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/opt/20241106-Gaza-Update-Report-OPT.pdf; and A/HRC/61/26.

[42] For example, the United Nations Development Fund crisis risk dashboard (https://data.undp.org/products/crisis-risk-dashboard) and Risk Anticipation Datahub and INFORM Warning (https://mptf.undp.org/project/00140727); the OHCHR Violet AI (an AI-powered early warning system for conflict-related sexual violence, available at https://hip.innovationnorway.com/article/scaling-early-warning-for-conflict-related-sexual-violence); UniteAware/SAGE (used in peace operations); the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research Arms Flows and Early Warning Dashboard (https://unidir.org/arms-flows-early-warning-dashboard/) and the OHCHR Human Rights Data Exchange platform (https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2025/12/high-commissioner-turk-rightsx-innovation-essential-area-human) are all tools providing a wealth of data from which indicators of risk of genocide and other atrocity crimes can be analysed.

[43] A/HRC/53/45.

Advance edited version

alarm over the risk of genocide in their statements[44] and country and thematic reports have included elements linked to the prevention of genocide.[45]

67. The Council has on several occasions acted on deteriorating situations by holding special sessions and establishing special mechanisms. Commissions of inquiry established by the Council are one means of raising early warning for the prevention of genocide.[46] Some Commissions have utilized the Framework of Analysis as a basis for their analysis of violations documented, to assess if those violations may also amount to possible international crimes.

68. The universal periodic review provides a way to address structural risk factors and to encourage national prevention measures. In their submissions, Member States have included information on such measures set out in national reports, whereas others have noted national action taken in response to recommendations made as part of the universal periodic review.

3. Human rights treaty bodies

69. Some treaty bodies have set up their own early warning procedures, most notably the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. This mechanism allows for recommendations from the Committee on evolving situations to be issued more rapidly. For example, since the last report on this topic, the Committee has expressed concern over the situations in Gaza[47] and the Sudan,[48] recalling States' obligations to prevent genocide.

70. The work of treaty bodies in examining State Parties' national reports and issuing lists of issues, concluding observations and recommendations provide another opportunity to identify and support remedial action on structural risk factors.[49]

IV. Cooperation for early warning and prevention

71. Early warning and early action are crucial for the prevention of genocide. Over the past two decades, research, investigations, judicial decisions and truth-seeking processes have deepened understanding of the risk factors, warning signs and triggers of genocide and other atrocity crimes. Yet, early warnings too often fail to generate timely and effective action. In some situations, warnings are met with denial, politicization or insufficient political will to respond.

72. Ongoing dynamics that question the multilateral system and well-established international human rights norms and standards are also having a profound impact on the ability and willingness of key players to act when warning signs of genocide and other atrocity crimes are being pointed out. Instead, there is a steady increase in military spending,[50]

[44] See, for example, https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/05/end-unfolding-genocide-or-watch-it-end-life-gaza-un-experts-say-states-face; and https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/08/seven-years-after-genocidal-attacks-world-must-act-stop-new-atrocities.

[45] Reports of Special Rapporteurs with such a focus (in period since last report on this topic until end of 2025) include A/80/479, A/80/175, A/HRC/55/73 and A/HRC/58/64.

[46] Since the last report on this topic, the independent international fact-finding mission for the Sudan (A/HRC/61/77) and the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel (in a conference room paper) have reported on the risk of atrocity crimes.

[47] Decisions 2 (2024) of the Committee.

[48] Decisions 1 (2024) and 2 (2025).

[49] For example, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination has issued recommendations on addressing hate speech and genocide denial in line with international human rights standards (CERD/C/BIH/CO/14-15, paras. 15 and 16); the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has urged effective accountability for persons with disabilities who are also victims of international crimes (CRPD/C/MMR/CO/1, paras. 31 and 32); and the Committee against Torture has highlighted reports of systematic use of torture as potential risk of atrocity crimes (CAT/C/ISR/CO/6, para. 28).

[50] The security we need: rebalancing military spending for a sustainable and peaceful future: report of the Secretary-General.

Advance edited version

amplified advocacy of division and war and a shrinking of civic space and resources allocated to prevention, peacebuilding and human rights work.

73. With financial resources declining and situations of concern growing, there is a need to enhance cooperation across national, regional and international initiatives and across the peace and security, human rights and development pillars. It is also essential to build a coalition of those committed to making the obligations under the Genocide Convention and the promise of its universal adoption a reality. Reversing negative trends requires capitalizing on political momentum, where it exists, to advance the genocide prevention agenda, as well as to consistently remind those with the responsibility to act of the consequences of failing to do so.

74. Many submissions for this report highlighted positive examples of cooperation, including joint training and assessments, peer exchange, technical assistance and financial support. Initiatives such as the Ljubljana-The Hague Convention on International Cooperation in the Investigation and Prosecution of the Crime of Genocide, Crimes against Humanity, War Crimes and Other International Crimes and the upcoming United Nations Conference of Plenipotentiaries on Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Humanity could represent opportunities to galvanize political momentum for action on accountability for and prevention of atrocity crimes.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

75. **Prevention of genocide requires continuous investment through risk assessment and the provision of support to local, national, regional and international early warning and prevention mechanisms. It also requires political commitment to act early and decisively when warning signs are present. Accountability is also key to effective prevention.**

76. **Member States are encouraged to strengthen early warning and action for genocide prevention, including through the implementation of the following measures to:**

(a) **Accede to and ensure full implementation of the Genocide Convention, including by establishing national legal and policy frameworks for prevention and accountability;**

(b) **Promote international cooperation for the full implementation of the Genocide Convention, including the obligation to prevent;**

(c) **Establish national early warning mechanisms for the prevention of genocide and other atrocity crimes or integrate a prevention mandate into existing mechanisms, based on an assessment of the specific national context, with clear mandates, trained personnel, agreed indicators, reporting lines, response protocols and adequate and sustained resources;**

(d) **Carry out regular risk assessments and, on that basis, develop national prevention strategies, either as stand-alone strategies or as part of broader prevention frameworks, including those encouraged under the Pact for the Future;**

(e) **Put in place clear responsibilities at the national level, with the requisite oversight, for national, regional and international mechanisms to respond to early warning alerts;**

(f) **Ensure an enabling environment for genocide prevention efforts, by protecting civic space and ensuring that civil society actors are able to genuinely contribute to prevention efforts without fear of reprisals or intimidation;**

(g) **Take steps to address specific risk factors of genocide, including discrimination and hate speech directed at national, ethnic, racial and religious groups;**

Advance edited version

(h) **Ensure that measures for the prevention of genocide and other atrocity crimes are inclusive of communities at risk and take into account the specific experiences, the protection needs and the contributions of marginalized groups, women and children;**

(i) **Put in place and ensure adequate support for existing national accountability mechanisms, including for the strengthening of the independence of national justice systems;**

(j) **Support specialized training for national investigators, prosecutors and judges on atrocity crimes: accountability efforts should include a focus on the specific impact on marginalized groups, women and children. Accountability efforts should also look at the destruction of cultural heritage sites committed as part of atrocity crimes;**

(k) **Cooperate, as appropriate, with existing regional and international institutions and accountability mechanisms, including, where applicable, the International Court of Justice;**

(l) **Implement relevant recommendations from the universal periodic review, treaty bodies, special rapporteurs and commissions of inquiries on the prevention of genocide and systematically include a prevention lens in their engagement with these mechanisms;**

(m) **Exchange information and good practices on prevention initiatives at the national level and disseminate judicial developments and judgments related to genocide and other atrocity crimes;**

(n) **Implement education on genocide prevention at all levels, including professional training, supported by the documentation, archiving and memorialization of past genocides.**

77. **The Office makes the following recommendations to regional mechanisms, the Human Rights Council and treaty bodies:**

(a) **Regional mechanisms, including those set up for early warning and those working on complementary issues, such as human rights protection, should integrate risk factors of genocide and other atrocity crimes into their work;**

(b) **The Human Rights Council and its mechanisms should continue using their mandates to support genocide prevention efforts through early warning and response. The Council could consider options for enhancing access to data on indicators of risk, such as hate speech and discrimination targeting the protected groups in the Genocide Convention. Treaty bodies should consider the structural risk factors of genocide when assessing national reports.**

78. **The Office makes the following recommendations to all actors:**

(a) **The use of data and technological tools in early warning for genocide prevention provides new opportunities for swifter, data-driven and evidence-based information on risks. Actors using such tools should adopt a human rights-based approach to data and conduct ongoing human rights due diligence, including with respect to privacy, data protection, discrimination and bias, transparency, accountability and the risk of misuse;**

(b) **States, regional mechanisms, the Human Rights Council and treaty bodies should continue cooperating with the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, by inviting the Special Adviser to undertake official visits, support national or regional risk assessments, brief the Council on his work and situations of concern, and join forces in prevention efforts;**

(c) **All actors should strengthen cooperation and coalition-building across national, regional and international mechanisms to counter the erosion of multilateral norms and the shrinking resources available for prevention. All actors should protect vulnerable communities, build consensus and advance practical cooperation for genocide prevention.**

Advance edited version