

GICJ Full Session Report

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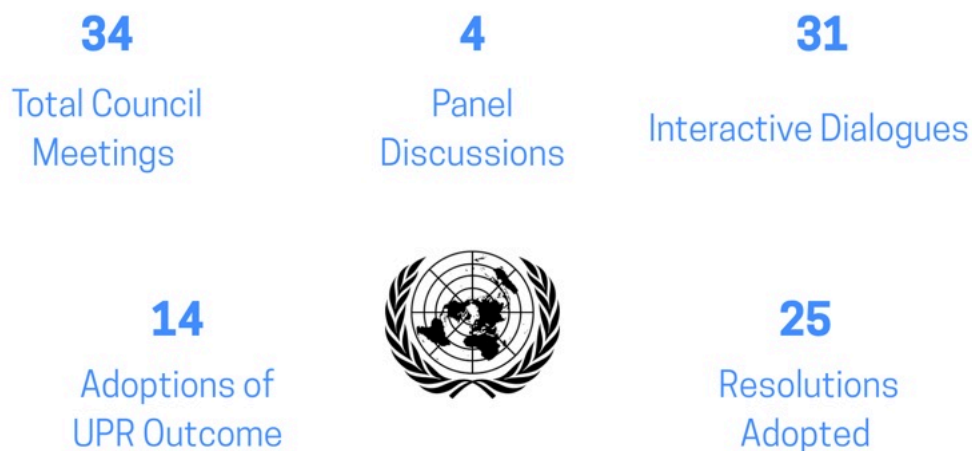
Introduction

From 16 June to 8 July 2025, the UN Human Rights Council held its 59th Session at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland. During the three and a half weeks, the Human Rights Council reinforced its pivotal role in strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights around the world, and addressed critical situations of human rights violations. In total, the Council held 34 council meetings, 31 (enhanced) interactive dialogues, 4 panel discussions, 12 universal periodic reviews, and further adopted a total of 25 resolutions.

While the Council held regular meetings addressing urgent human rights crises around the world, its country-specific focus laid on the situations in Israel/Palestine, Ukraine, the DRC and Sudan. Further key issues included gender rights and violence against women, civic space, civil society and press freedom, climate change, and lastly operational challenges concerning the liquidity crisis and UN funding cuts.

Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ) actively participated in the 59th Session of the UN Human Rights Council by submitting a total of 11 written statements discussing various human rights issues like humanitarian aid and genocide in Palestine, climate change, enforced disappearances in Iraq, racial discrimination in the digital age, and women's and children's human rights in Sudan. Moreover, in close collaboration with other NGOs, such as International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (EAFORD), Meezaan Center for Human Rights, Association Ma'onah for Human Rights, and Immigration and International-lawyers.Org, our members delivered 7 oral statements on the human rights situations in Burundi, Angola, the Central African Republic and Iraq, as well as called for immediate action concerning genocidal violence in Palestine and in Sudan. Finally, the team prepared 21 discussion reports to summarise the important debates that took place at the Council during the meetings.

The 59th Session of the Human Rights Council



With its participation, GICJ highlights and reaffirms the important role that NGOs and civil society play in the work of the Human Rights Council. Globally, civil society organisations are a fundamental component of human rights work and advocacy, as they are often closest to realities on the ground and serve as the voices of minorities, victims, and affected local communities. Moreover, their independence from national governments enables them to critically monitor and call out state conduct that violates human rights. We hereby want to emphasise out this pivotal role of NGOs and civil society organisations without whose participation in the Human Rights Council the true issues and challenges of people worldwide would remain unaddressed.

List of Agenda Items

The list below represents the permanent agenda items of the Human Rights Council in its 3 regular sessions. Under each item several topics are discussed in each session.

1. Organizational and procedural matters.
2. Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General.
3. Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development.
4. Human rights situations that require the Council's attention.
5. Human rights bodies and mechanisms.
6. Universal periodic review.
7. Human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories.
8. Follow-up to and implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.
9. Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance: follow-up to and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.
10. Technical assistance and capacity-building.

GICJ Participation



Reflecting the collaborative spirit of the 59th session of the Human Rights Council, Geneva International Centre for Justice undertook the preparations, energised by the active contributions of its volunteers and interns.

Additionally, to further the team's experience and knowledge of the Human Rights Council and the UN systems, our team had a tour of the UN in which they were able to interact with the history of the United Nations, while also experiencing the beautiful Palais des Nations. This day was not only an enlightening experience for our team but also a chance for them to embrace and act on their passions as human rights advocates.





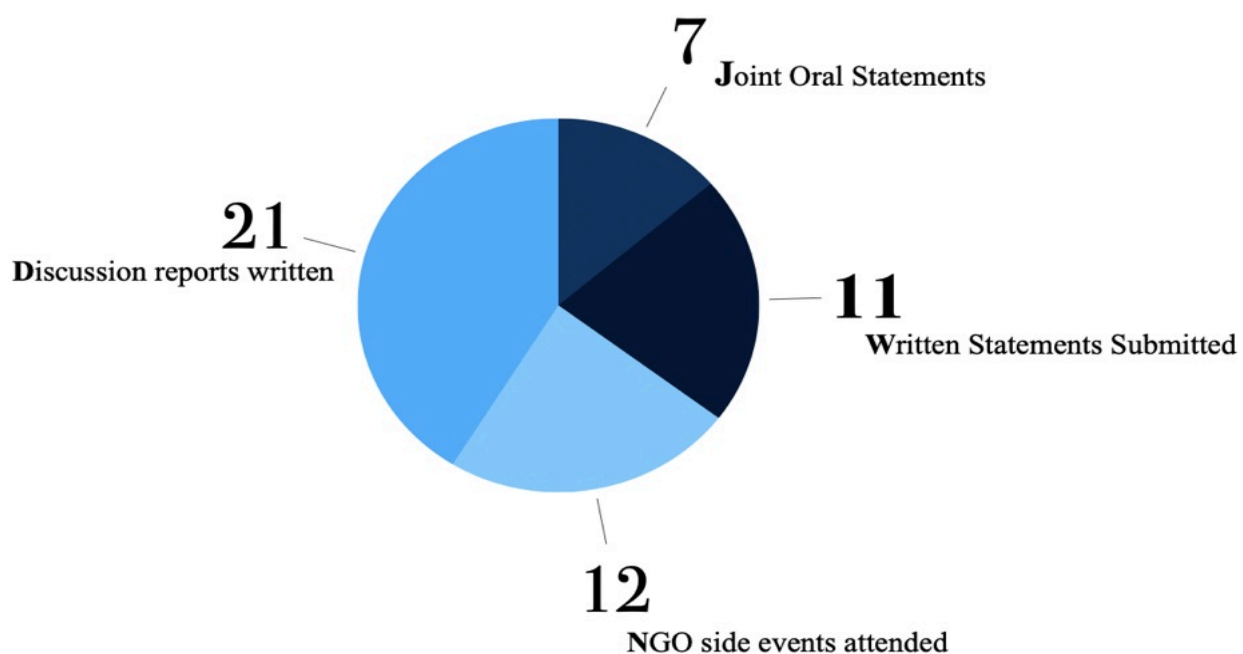
Gearing up for the session, GICJ had a whole office meeting with all the interns and volunteers, both in person and online on the 4th June 2025. The purpose of this meeting was to outline our goals for participating in the Human Rights Council (HRC) session, with a particular focus on developing effective strategies. It also served as a platform to delegate tasks and responsibilities among team members to ensure smooth coordination throughout the session.

During the HRC, GICJ had the opportunity to deliver 7 oral statements in different discussions concerning human rights issues within the list of agenda. We covered items ranging from the discussion on occupied Palestinian Territories to the Human rights crisis in Burundi. In preparation, the interns drafted and rehearsed their respective speeches for the HRC. These rehearsals gave our interns and volunteers opportunities to engage with a peer reviewed perspective in which their peers were able to give them guided feedback that strengthened their statements. Additionally, it provided our interns and volunteers an opportunity to engage and learn about the UN systems and their functions as well as strengthen their advocacy skills.



Overall, Geneva International Centre for Justice continuously engaged with the 59th Session of the Human Rights Council with members of our team delivering 7 joint oral statements, 11 written statements and publishing 21 discussion reports on the different meetings.

GICJ Participation at the 59th Session of the Human Rights Council



Opening Statements

The United Nations Human Rights Council's 59th session commenced on June 16, 2025.

The session began with opening remarks from **Mr. Jürg Lauber, President of the Human Rights Council**. The president reminded that while it is absolutely legitimate to express opinions on the report, nothing justifies personal attacks or threats. As president, he wished to ensure that any intimidations towards groups or individuals will be looked into. A policy of zero tolerance for all forms of harassment.



Mr. Volker Türk, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, addressed escalating global conflicts and disregard for human rights and law, citing attacks on civilians, starvation and rape as weapons, humanitarian aid destruction, and lack of accountability. He urged de-escalation between Israel and Iran, emphasising diplomatic solutions. He linked global economic uncertainty and technological development to climate chaos, stating, "Behind each crisis people are suffering, we must never lose sight of this fact."

Mr. Türk reaffirmed the UN's founding principles of ending war, upholding human rights, and promoting justice. While acknowledging successful global agreements, he warned of efforts to weaken them, calling for strong defense of international human rights law.

He condemned Israel's "horrifying unconditional action" in Gaza, reporting over 65,000 Palestinian deaths, demanding immediate investigations into attacks on civilians, and criticising Israel's ban on international journalists. He urged pressure on Israel and Hamas to end suffering, noting West Bank attacks by Israeli forces and settlers. He called for immediate release of all hostages and a two-state solution with Gaza as part of a Palestinian

state. The High Commissioner urged Israel and Lebanon to respect the ceasefire and emphasised the international community's role in supporting reforms and recovery. He called for a comprehensive ceasefire in Ukraine, citing civilian casualties and continued detention of prisoners.



He expressed concern about human rights violations in El Fasher, Sudan, particularly sexual violence against children, urging a political solution, arms control, and accountability. He also urged South Sudan to resume dialogue. Mr. Türk discussed military exploitation and restricted aid in Myanmar, calling for an end to violence and compliance with international law. He urged India and Pakistan to maintain their ceasefire, prevent hateful rhetoric, and reestablish water-sharing arrangements.

He renewed his call for the immediate release of UN, civil society, and diplomatic personnel detained in Yemen, calling it an affront to the international community. Mr. Türk highlighted gang violence in Haiti, calling for a UN mission to support security and timely judiciary meetings. He expressed grave concern over abuse of migrants and refugees in Libya and urged investigations into corpses found in detention centers. He voiced deep concern about human rights violations in Syria, calling for protection and accountability and a significant UN office presence. For Ethiopia, he urged constructive dialogue for ceasefire implementation and protection of civil space for elections. He highlighted crises in the Sahara, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, and growing instability in Nigeria, noting increased violence by armed groups and intercommunal clashes.

His office reported at least 625 human rights defenders and media workers killed or disappeared globally in 2024, calling for their protection, especially in countries with upcoming elections where public gatherings are banned and opposition leaders detained. He

expressed concern about mass detentions in Turkey, including opposition figures, on corruption and terrorism charges, calling for their release. Mr. Türk asserted that new laws in Georgia and El Salvador hinder NGOs and independent media, noting similar legislation in Hungary. He remains deeply concerned by suppression of dissenting voices in Russia. He recognised the courage of young people in Serbia mobilising for accountability. The High Commissioner continues direct engagement with China on various issues, expressing concern about a lack of legal reform focus and shrinking civic space in Hong Kong due to national security laws.

He noted that social tensions stem from systemic discrimination based on race, religion, sex, personal identity, migrant status, and caste. He highlighted widespread discrimination against women, especially in Russia and the US, citing restrictions on reproductive rights, and urged the repeal of laws like the "hijab" suspension that limit women's public life. Migrants in the US, Myanmar, and the Dominican Republic face deportation, raising concerns about their rights. In Europe, he urged EU countries to prioritise human rights in migration governance and uphold peaceful assembly, avoiding military force when civilian authorities can maintain order. He is optimistic about human rights expansion globally, citing increased representation for indigenous peoples, legalisation of marriage equality in Thailand, and Pakistan's outlaw of child marriage. However, he warned that low-income countries face debt distress, impacting food, health, and living standards. The climate crisis and dwindling development finance, coupled with trade wars and soaring tariffs by major economies, could devastate countries with large export sectors, disproportionately affecting women in manufacturing and limiting access to healthcare and education. He concluded that global stability requires a shift to human rights and sustainable development, not trade wars or arms races.

Oral Statements

During the 59th session of the Council, GICJ members had the opportunity to deliver seven oral statements to draw the Council's focus on certain country-specific and thematic areas. Our interns and volunteers used the time allocated to them to devote attention to the violations suffered by people in Palestine, Sudan, Burundi, Iraq, and Central African Republic, and Angola. Concretely, the statements were delivered under the following agenda items:

- ❖ Item 2: Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General.
- ❖ Item 3: Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development.
- ❖ Item 4: Human rights situations that require the Council's attention.
- ❖ Item 6: Universal Periodic Review.
- ❖ Item 10: Technical assistance and capacity-building.

Here you will find a summary of the main points brought up during the statements, with a link to watch the full version of the statements on our website.

Agenda Item 2

A Call on the Council to Stop the Genocide in Gaza

Interactive Dialogue with the Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Joint Statement on behalf of International Lawyers Org and Geneva International Centre for Justice

17 June 2025



By Sheema Al Sabah / GICJ

‘Genocide is not only a crime; it is a call to action.’ Sheema Al Sabah proclaims as she echoes Geneva International Centre for Justice and International Lawyers.Org’s joint aim to utilise the principles of international law in the face of the human rights atrocities and ongoing genocide in Palestine. She urges member state to uphold the Genocide Convention to prevent and punish the occupational forces.

[Click here to watch the full oral statement and read the transcription](#)

Agenda Item 3

A Call for Effective Measures to Stop Genocidal Violence in Sudan

Interactive Dialogue with the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide

Joint Statement on behalf of Ma'onah Association for Human Rights and Immigration and
Geneva International Centre for Justice

23 June 2025



By Stefania Plougarli / GICJ

‘What more evidence must be presented before the international community intervenes to prevent a genocide in Sudan?’ Stefania Plougarli interrogates the Council as she transmits Geneva International Centre for Justice and Ma'onah Association for Human Rights and Immigration's joint message to utilise the rules of international law amidst the ongoing genocide in Sudan dating from the civil war. She highlights that the international community and Special Adviser have a duty to uphold the UN Convention and hence, a duty to intervene in Sudan. She calls upon the Special Adviser to maintain their mandate before the complete and total annihilation of Sudan's ethnic groups.

[Click here to watch the full oral statement and read the transcription](#)

Agenda Item 4

Addressing Burundi's Ongoing Human Rights Concerns

Interactive Dialogue on Oral Update of Special Rapporteur on Burundi

Joint statement on behalf of International Organisation for the Elimination of All forms of Racial Discrimination and Geneva International Centre for Justice

27 June 2025



By Rose Chiara Atieno / GICJ

‘The government continues to prove that freedom of expression and freedom of the press is merely a concept but not a reality for those in the country.’ Rose Chiara Atieno enunciates in front of the Council, bringing attention to the continued decade-long human rights crisis in Burundi, signifying the state’s evasion of its duty to uphold human rights law. She cites the election period as being particularly treacherous for journalists and civilians alike. She sustains Geneva International Centre for Justice and the International Organisation for the Elimination of All forms of Racial Discrimination (EAFORD)’s goal by speaking on behalf of the victims of these human rights violations and urging the Special Rapporteur to, in her own words ‘continue advocating for the release of all remaining individuals held in violation of due process.’

[Click here to watch the full oral statement and read the transcription](#)

Agenda Item 6

Angola UPR: Progress Made but More Action Needed

UPR adoption outcomes of Angola

Joint statement by Association Ma'onah for Human Rights and Immigration and Geneva
International Centre for Justice

1 July 2025



By Skye Visser / GICJ

‘Over 2.9 million women and girls in Angola have already experienced the devastating consequences of child marriage.’ Skye Visser cites as she acknowledges that despite the commendable progress Angola has made through its adoption of the UPR process, there are still steps needed to ensure the maintenance of human rights and dignity in the state. She reiterates Geneva International Centre for Justice and the Association Ma'onah for Human Rights and Immigration's joint stance on the issue, exclaiming a need to uphold the norms of international human rights law. She calls for the ratification of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance in Angola to ensure the protection and respect of Angolan rights.

[Click here to watch the full oral statement and read the transcription.](#)

Iraq UPR: A Demand for Effective Implementation of UPR

UPR adoption outcomes of Iraq

Joint oral statement by Meezaan Center for Human Rights and Geneva International Centre
for Justice

2 July 2025



By Ahmed Wahbi / GICJ

‘The absence of implementation leaves those recommendations ink on paper.’ Ahmed Wahbi proclaims, noting Iraq’s rejection of significant state recommendations. Ahmed articulates what Geneva International Centre for Justice and Meezaan Center for Human Rights aim to convey, that human rights violations are a direct result of the absence of human rights laws and norms in Iraq. He urges Iraq to take on the UN’s many recommendations and agree to the principles of the the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture.

[Click here to watch the full oral statement and read the transcription.](#)

Agenda Item 10

CAR Crisis: Urgent Call for Peace, Protection & Regional Action

Interactive Dialogue on the oral update of the Independent Expert on Central African Republic

Joint Statement on behalf of International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and Geneva International Centre for Justice

4 July 2025



By Mutua K. Kobia / GICJ

‘With nearly 40% of the population in need of humanitarian aid this year, the need for support is extremely urgent.’ Mutua K. Kobia announces to the Council, noting that despite the efforts of the Central African Republic to improve national security, the regional population continues to suffer widespread human rights violations. Mutua refers to the Independent Expert’s analysis as he highlights the extent of the atrocities that threaten the citizens’ rights and the possibility of a democratic electoral process. He echoes Geneva International Centre for Justice and International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination’s calls for peace in the region and a stable electoral process through recommendations.

[Click here to watch the full oral statement and read the transcription.](#)

CAR Children Deserve Peace - A Plea for Change

Interactive Dialogue on the oral update of the Independent Expert on Central African Republic

Joint statement by Association Ma'onah for Human Rights and Immigration and Geneva International Centre for Justice.

4 July 2025



By Prishika Adhira Bhoyroo / GICJ

‘In a world increasingly plagued by the atrocities of war, geopolitical instability, and climate change - it must be a global priority for individuals to be entitled to their fundamental human rights and freedoms.’ Prishika Adhira Bhoyroo declares as she cites the human rights violations propagating the Central African Republic’s civil society, stripping them of their dignity and rights. She focuses on the most vulnerable and threatened individuals, shifting her focus towards the children of the CAR. Prishika maintains Geneva International Centre for Justice and the Association Ma'onah for Human Rights and Immigration’s pleas for the international community and Council to protect Central Africans rights by implementing the peace agreement and championing justice, amidst the deteriorating situation in the CAR.

[Click here to watch the full oral statement and read the transcription](#)

Written Statements

Before the beginning of the session, GICJ submitted twelve written statements to the attention of the UN Human Rights Council. In these statements, written by our interns and volunteers, GICJ urges the Council to take action and investigate violations in Palestine, Sudan, Iraq, and Iran. At the same time, we also focused on thematic issues such as that of human rights and climate change, human trafficking, and racial discrimination in the digital age. Our statements were submitted under the following agenda items:

- ❖ Item 2: Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General.
- ❖ Item 3: Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development.
- ❖ Item 6: Universal Periodic Review.
- ❖ Item 7: Human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories.
- ❖ Item 9: Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance: follow-up to and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

What follows is a summary of our submitted written statement, with a link to the full statements online.

Agenda Item 2

End the impunity of Israel's Genocide in Palestine

In its written statement, GICJ called for Israel to face trial for serious violations, implement an immediate ceasefire, withdraw from occupied territories, and recognise Palestinian rights and sovereignty. It also urges the UN and international actors to increase pressure on Israel through sanctions, arms embargoes, and full cooperation with international legal investigations by the ICC and ICJ. Accountability is still lacking in the case of Israel's occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT). International courts such as the ICJ and ICC have taken action against these crimes against humanity by issuing an arrest warrant for Israeli Prime Minister, Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu, and former Minister of Defense, Mr. Yoav Gallant, in November 2024. But despite these rulings, the genocide against the Palestinians continues unhindered. As outlined in the statement, according to the ICJ ruling, Israel is obligated to bring an end to the occupation of Palestinian territories, immediately cease the construction of new settlements, and make reparations for the damages caused. However, these obligations are being largely disregarded by the Israeli government, which

has instead escalated military operations and continued expanding settlements. As expressed in the statement, UN experts have issued warnings of living conditions in Gaza calculated to destroy the Palestinian population, with indiscriminate targeting of civilians. GICJ calls on the international community to act without delay, stressing that meaningful justice and the protection of Palestinian lives depend on swift, coordinated international action.

[Click here to read full written statement](#)

The grave violations of international law by Israel in its occupation of the Palestinian territories

GICJ urged the Council to demand Israel's immediate compliance with International Court of Justice (ICJ) provisional measures, including lifting all restrictions on humanitarian aid to Gaza. The organisation further called for robust protection of UNRWA's mandate, emergency funding to restore its operations, and the urgent investigation and prosecution of Israel's alleged genocidal acts. The Council was also urged to reaffirm the Palestinian right to self-determination, reject efforts to criminalise legitimate resistance, and enforce erga omnes obligations by pressuring States to suspend arms sales to Israel, impose sanctions, and apply universal jurisdiction over war crimes. These calls follow Israel's escalating violations of international law, including deliberate starvation, mass displacement, and destruction of Gaza's infrastructure. Since March 2025, Israel has blocked nearly all humanitarian aid, leaving UNRWA with only 250 food parcels for 2 million Gazans. Nearly 300 UNRWA staff have been killed, and its facilities targeted. Despite binding obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention, the Genocide Convention, and the UN Charter, Israel continues to obstruct life-saving relief and undermine the right of return for refugees. Without immediate action, the Council risks enabling further atrocities and abandoning its core mandate to protect human rights.

[Click here to read full written statement](#)

The Sudan: Women's and Children's Rights, Internally Displaced Persons, and Access to Food

Through this written statement, an urgent focus was placed on the catastrophic human rights and humanitarian crisis unfolding in Sudan due to the ongoing conflict between the

Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). The Council was urged to sustain international attention on the crisis to prevent it from fading into obscurity and to promote peaceful resolution efforts. Immediate action was called to end sexual violence being used as a method of war, which has been perpetrated against women, children, men, and boys alike. The Council was further urged to demand an immediate cessation of child recruitment into armed groups, alongside guarantees for children's rights to education, food, shelter, and protection from hostilities. The conflict has displaced over 11.6 million internally, forcing millions more to flee the country. Civilians remain vulnerable to ongoing attacks, torture, enforced disappearances, and severe restrictions on humanitarian aid access. Women and girls have suffered disproportionately as sexual violence has been systematically deployed as a method of war, with victims ranging from eight to 75 years old. The number of survivors seeking support has dramatically increased, reflecting the scale of abuse. Children face grave violations, including killing, abduction, forced recruitment, and attacks on schools, exemplified by deadly airstrikes on educational facilities in 2024. Despite legal prohibitions, child soldiers remain present in various conflict zones.

[Click here to read full written statement](#)

Agenda Item 3

Human Rights and Climate Change

In its written statement, GICJ stressed that climate change is a grave and urgent threat to human rights and that the Human Rights Council must act decisively to enforce the integration of human rights and climate obligations. An interconnected and rights-based approach is essential to uphold human dignity and ensure justice in the face of the climate crisis. At COP29 in Baku (November 2024), States reaffirmed the urgent goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, as mandated by the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement. However, current Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) remain insufficient, projecting a catastrophic 2.5 -- 2.9°C increase by 2100. GICJ urges the Council to recognise the binding legal obligations under international climate and human rights law, including the ICCPR and ICESCR, which require States to prevent climate-induced violations of rights to life, health, and an adequate standard of living. COP29 reinforced accountability measures, climate finance commitments, and the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge and gender equity in climate policy. Recent international rulings further affirm the indivisibility of climate action and human rights protection.

[Click here to read full written statement](#)

Iraq's Assault on the Right to Peaceful Assembly

GICJ expressed grave concern over Iraq's ongoing assault on the right to peaceful assembly. In its written statement, GICJ called on the Council to investigate all protest-related killings, injuries, and enforced disappearances; repeal Interior Ministry rules requiring prior authorisation for peaceful assemblies; withdraw the draft Law on Freedom of Expression and Peaceful Assembly; and end internet shutdowns during protests. GICJ also urged training for security forces on the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force, the release of detained journalists, and the creation of an independent commission to monitor violations and recommend reforms.

Despite constitutional guarantees under Article 38, peaceful demonstrations in Iraq are met with unlawful force. Security forces and militias routinely use live ammunition, rubber bullets, stun grenades, and military-grade tear gas to disperse protests. In September 2023, authorities violently dismantled a sit-in in Baghdad, injuring multiple demonstrators. Courts continue to impose prison sentences of up to one year for unapproved gatherings under a Coalition-era order. These repressive tactics, combined with legal and administrative barriers, reflect a deliberate strategy to silence dissent, criminalise civic activism, and erode public trust in state institutions.

[Click here to read full written statement](#)

Palestinians in Gaza Face Starvation, Forced Displacement, and Genocidal Violence

GICJ raised an urgent alarm over the catastrophic human rights crisis in Gaza. In its written statement, submitted jointly with GICJ and other NGO's, the organisations condemn the ongoing genocide against the Palestinian people, marked by mass killings, forced displacement, starvation, and sexual violence. As of May 2025, over 52,000 Palestinians – 70% of them women and children – had been killed. It is really a tax systematically targeting civilians and critical structures.

GICJ emphasises that Israel's complete lack of humanitarian aid since March 2025 has pushed Gaza and led to a state-induced famine, mounting to the use of starvation as a weapon of genocide. The statement also cited findings by the independent commissions of inquiry and the international court of justice both of which teamed Israel's actions potentially

genocidal under international law. Calling on the UN special advisor on the prevention of genocide, GICJ criticised the office for its silence and urged immediate action to prevent further atrocities. The statement called for an immediate fire, full humanitarian access, a halt to all military and financial support enabling Israeli operations, and the urgent activation of accountability mechanisms under the genocide convention. GICJ concluded by stressing that failure to act now but make the world complicit and the complete annihilation of the Palestinian people in Gaza.

[Click here to read full written statement](#)

The Human Rights Situation of Women and Girls in Iraq

GICJ used this written statement to call for urgent attention to the ongoing and systemic violations of women's rights in Iraq, where decades of conflict, sanctions, and legal regressions have devastated the lives of women and girls. The Council was urged to dispatch an independent international inquiry to thoroughly investigate abuses since 2003, ensuring accountability for widespread violations, including arbitrary detention, torture, and gender-based violence. Mobilising international funding and technical assistance to strengthen Iraqi justice institutions was emphasised, with a focus on training legal actors and establishing survivor-centered protection mechanisms. Particular concern was raised over the January 2025 amendment to the 1959 Personal Status Law, which shifted family law authority from civil to religious courts, undermining protections for women and children and risking increased child marriage and legal disenfranchisement. The Council was called upon to demand the repeal of this regressive amendment and to urge Iraq to align its legislation fully with international human rights treaties such as CEDAW and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Despite constitutional guarantees and prior recommendations, the failure to act perpetuates gender inequality, poverty, and violence. Without decisive international engagement, Iraqi women and girls will continue to bear the heaviest burden of the country's instability and injustice.

[Click here to read full written statement](#)

Agenda Item 6

Iraq's fourth universal periodic review

GICJ addressed in this written statement the alarming gaps between Iraq's official reporting and the on-the-ground reality during its Fourth Universal Periodic Review (UPR). In its joint written statement, GICJ and partner organisations highlighted Iraq's failure to implement most recommendations from previous cycles, particularly concerning civil liberties, women's rights, the rule of law, accountability, torture prevention, and the treatment of internally displaced persons (IDPs). The statement condemned Iraq's use of vague laws to suppress dissent, the continued harassment of activists and journalists, and the violent dispersal of peaceful protests. GICJ noted that despite rhetorical reforms, Iraq's judiciary remains politicised, and human rights violations—including torture, enforced disappearances, and deaths in custody—persist unchecked. The statement also raised concerns over the use of state-affiliated media to spread sectarian hate speech and the targeting of human rights organisations. GICJ urges the Council to press Iraq to establish an independent accountability mechanism, pass a domestic violence law, ensure access to justice for detainees, and uphold the rights to free expression and assembly. The statement concluded by stressing that only genuine reforms—not polished rhetoric—can restore trust in Iraq's human rights commitments.

[Click here to read full written statement](#)

The Universal Periodic Review of the Islamic Republic of Iran

GICJ drew the attention to Iran's ongoing human rights violations highlighted during its fourth Universal Periodic Review (A/HRC/59/NGO/322). The Human Rights Council should urge the Islamic Republic of Iran to: end marginalisation of Ahwazi Arabs; allow Arabic-language education and cultural expression; release all political prisoners and ensure fair trials; stop forced displacement and environmental mismanagement, providing reparations; ensure equal access to employment, healthcare, and services; halt all support to Houthi militias and comply with UNSC Resolution 2216; cooperate with international investigations; repeal discriminatory laws against women, abolish compulsory hijab, and enact protections against gender-based violence; free women's rights defenders; and promote women's equal participation in public life. The report documents systemic repression of Ahwazi Arabs through cultural and linguistic erasure, arbitrary arrests, torture, executions, forced displacement, and severe socio-economic exclusion despite Khuzestan's resource wealth. It

condemns Iran's military and ideological support to Houthi forces in Yemen, which has fueled atrocities including child soldier recruitment, indiscriminate attacks, and obstruction of aid, violating international humanitarian law and UN resolutions. Furthermore, entrenched gender discrimination persists through restrictive family laws, compulsory hijab enforcement, criminalisation of women's rights activism, and lack of legal protections against domestic violence. Immediate, comprehensive reforms are imperative to uphold Iran's international human rights obligations.

[Click here to read full written statement](#)

Agenda Item 7

Addressing Humanitarian Aid in Gaza

In this statement, GICJ took a stance on addressing humanitarian aid in Gaza. In its written statement on the Genocide going on in Palestine, GICJ called on the UN to uphold international legal obligations by protecting humanitarian personnel and infrastructure, while also urgently addressing structural causes of the crisis. GICJ also calls on all member states to restore full access and ensure accountability for these violations. The statement states that as of March 2025, Israel has had a complete blockade of humanitarian aid, which has pushed Gaza's population into conditions of mass starvation and medical collapse. The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the occupied Palestinian territories has described this form of obstruction as a weaponisation of humanitarian aid. These obstructions have caused shortages in essentials such as baby formula, insulin, and water purification tablets. Humanitarian access is being treated as a matter of political discretion, which is turning the delivery of food and medical assistance into being contingent on compliance with the political aims of the occupying power. The international community should no longer accept this as collateral damage; the protections in international law are binding, not aspirational. GICJ affirms the findings of the Special Rapporteurs and stresses that humanitarian norms should not be disregarded and manipulated in order to further facilitate harm.

[Click here to read full written statement](#)

Agenda Item 9

Racial Discrimination in the Digital Age

In this written statement, GICJ urged Member States to implement national legislation aligned with ICERD and the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA), adopt binding safeguards against algorithmic bias and digital discrimination, and abolish exploitative systems like kafala. GICJ also called for mandated human rights audits of artificial intelligence technologies, stronger international regulation of online hate speech, and national action plans to combat anti-Black racism. GICJ also encouraged states to fulfill the commitments of the International Decade for People of African Descent, develop anti-racism education campaigns, and increase public awareness of the DDPA's provisions. The statement highlighted how new technologies, including AI and facial recognition systems, perpetuate racial bias. These tools often misidentify black individuals, leading to wrongful arrest and denial of services. Predictive policing in algorithmic welfare fraud systems has proportionately harmed communities of color. All platforms amplify hate speech, feeling offline. GICJ called for urgent legal forms regulation of AI digital surveillance, protection for black domestic workers under exploitative systems like kafala, and robust public education on anti-racism and the DDPA. The statement emphasises the need for the UN to fully implement resolutions under item 9 and elevate public awareness of the DDPA. Without full action and collective accountability, racism, both structural and digital, will continue to erode human rights and social justice globally.

[Click here to read full written statement](#)

Discussion Reports

Gender Apartheid in Afghanistan Faces International Scrutiny

Item 2: Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan

16 June 2025



By Ahmed Wahbi / GICJ

Taliban control since August 2021 dismantled Afghanistan's constitutional and judicial structures. Male clerics without formal legal study now pass oral edicts inside all-male courts; every woman judge, prosecutor and defender stands removed. Mahram rules bar women from independent entry to clinics, markets and courtrooms. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) logged 180 public lash sentences in the first quarter of 2025. Girls cannot study above grade six and universities exclude women, which leaves 2.2 million adolescent girls outside education.

Hazara districts record land seizure and forced conversion, while journalists confront raids and closure orders. Pakistan and Iran forced more than 251 thousand Afghans across borders in April 2025, 96 thousand by direct deportation. Pakistani air strikes and shell fire struck frontier provinces during the same period. The United Nations counts 22.9 million Afghans who rely on aid that keeps them alive, yet the response plan holds only 15 % of required funds.

Special Rapporteur **Richard Bennett**, in report A/HRC/59/25, stated that Taliban edicts turn the legal order into an instrument of domination: abolition of the 2004 Constitution, repeal of

the Elimination of Violence against Women Law, dismissal of every woman legal professional, reversal of divorce rulings and the mahram rule form crimes against humanity and gender apartheid. Bennett called for an independent mechanism to collect evidence, identify perpetrators and forward files to the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice; he also urges states to place gender apartheid within the catalogue of crimes against humanity.

During the Human Rights Council dialogue on 16 June 2025, High Commissioner Volker Türk, Deputy High Commissioner **Nada al Nashif**, Special Rapporteur Bennett, Afghan witnesses and state delegations confirmed systemic gender oppression. States demanded immediate restoration of women's rights, an independent investigation, expanded humanitarian finance and strict benchmarks before any diplomatic contact. NGOs echoed these demands and pressed for direct support for Afghan women led groups and safe pathways for at-risk communities. Consensus now recognises Taliban rule as institutionalised gender apartheid; humanitarian collapse deepens; accountability and empowerment of Afghan women must anchor every international response.

Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ) condemns Taliban gender apartheid, urges swift creation of the investigative mechanism, backs codification of gender apartheid as a crime against humanity, demands verifiable rights benchmarks before any dialogue, direct finance for Afghan women-led civil society, safe corridors for at-risk groups and immediate release of detained journalists.

[Click here to view the full discussion report](#)

Lack of progress in Human Rights Protection in Eritrea

Item 2: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Eritrea

16 June 2025

By Satine Walz / GICJ

The 1st meeting of the 59th Session of the Human Rights Council was concluded with the opening of the Interactive Dialogue on the human rights situation in Eritrea on 16 June 2025.

During the dialogue, **the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Eritrea, Mr. Mohamed Abdelsalam Babiker**, remained deeply concerned over Eritrea's

widespread and systematic human rights violations, and the undermining of vital public services. He specifically addressed the ongoing militarisation of education, compulsory military service, restrictions on religious freedom, the operation of detention facilities, and the experiences of Eritrean refugees and asylum seekers, noting that 18% of the population has fled the country. Eritrea's representative dismissed the report as politically motivated and a remnant of colonialism.



During the dialogue, many representatives condemned the Human Rights violations articulated by the Special Rapporteur, such as the militarisation of education, torture, forced conscription, and experiences of migrants and asylum seekers. Many other speakers mirrored the concerns of the Special Rapporteur, and insisted for an increase of engagement with the Eritrean government to create an open dialogue.

Multiple representatives from Africa posited that the confrontational approach of the report fails to achieve a meaningful outcome in protecting and promoting human rights. Overall, various representatives called on Eritrea and the UN mechanism to continue their engagements in a positive manner. The representative urged for universality and non selectivity in addressing international human rights issues, since the approach fails to achieve a meaningful outcome in protecting and promoting human rights

The international community was urged to hold Eritrea accountable for its obligations under international human rights law and to press the Eritrean government to implement key reforms, including the cessation of indefinite military service, improved judicial transparency, and full cooperation with international human rights mechanisms. The UN remains

committed to assisting Eritrea in addressing these challenges and fostering meaningful reforms.

Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ) expresses deep concern regarding the impact of Eritrea's national services on human rights and the ongoing suppression of fundamental freedoms. GICJ calls upon the Council to urge the Eritrean government to acknowledge and address the mounting evidence of human rights violations, including increased repression of freedom of expression and religion, forced displacement, forced conscription, torture, and sexual and gender-based violence.

GICJ calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners, journalists, prisoners of conscience, and individuals detained for their faith.

[Click here to view the full discussion report](#)

Sudan's ongoing humanitarian and human rights catastrophe

Item 2: Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Sudan Oral Update

17 June 2025

By Minna A./ GICJ

The 59th Session of the Human Rights Council featured a very critical oral update on the concerning human rights situation in Sudan by the appointed mandate, the Independent International Fact Finding Mission on Sudan (IFFM Sudan), which provided a horrific account of a state entrenched in an escalating humanitarian and human rights crisis. It highlighted ongoing work to fulfil the key responsibilities of the mandate: investigating violations and their root causes, preserving evidence, identifying perpetrators, collaborating with judicial and legal mechanisms, and making recommendations to support accountability as well as victims.



The oral update underlined patterns of mass atrocities across Sudan, including ethnically targeted attacks, extrajudicial killings, indiscriminate bombings, systematic sexual violence, weaponisation of humanitarian aid, and widespread destruction of infrastructure. The war has caused severe famine, with alarming cases of children dying from starvation due to aid blockades. In response, the Sudanese Government reaffirmed the integrity of its national investigative mechanisms and judicial systems, noting over 120,000 cases reviewed and more than 1,000 verdicts issued. This update reinforces the obligations of the international community to act urgently in upholding arms embargoes, ensuring humanitarian access, and ensuring accountability and justice for victims and survivors.

[Click here to view the full discussion report](#)

Commission Urges Action on Violations of Palestinians' Rights

Item 2: ID with the Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel

17 June 2025

By Elisa Goislard Nguyen / GICJ

On 17 June 2025, during the 4th meeting of the 59th regular session, the Human Rights Council held an interactive dialogue (ID) with Navanethem Pillay, lead Commissioner of the Commission of Inquiry (COI) in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), including East Jerusalem, and Israel. During the ID, Mrs. Pillay presented the Commission's latest report on violations of international humanitarian and human rights law (IHL/IHR) in the OPT, detailing

deliberate instances of Israeli military attacks on educational, religious, and cultural sites, many of which serve as refuge sites for Palestinians in Gaza. Furthermore, the report lingered on the intensification of Israeli violence in the occupied West Bank, with increasing settler attacks on Palestinians and Palestinian worshipers at non-Jewish heritage sites, as well as illegal land annexations.



This report follows the Resolution S-30/1[1] adopted by the Human Rights Council on 27 May 2021, which established an ongoing independent COI to investigate all violations of IHL and IHR leading up to and since 13 April 2021, and “all underlying root causes of recurrent tensions, instability and protraction of conflict” in the OPT with the foundational objective of securing justice and respect for the rule of law and human rights—indispensable bases for peace and security in the region.

Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ) urges the international community to take tangible actions to end the ongoing genocide, protect the Palestinian people’s safety, dignity, and unalienable right to self-determination, and enable the immediate and unimpeded access of humanitarian aid and UN investigators to Gaza and the OPT in accordance with the ICJ order of 24 May 2024.

[Click here to view the full discussion report](#)

From Loss to Justice – Upholding the Rights of Families of the Unlawfully Killed

Item 3: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions

18 June 2025



By Hiya Sharma / GICJ

During the 59th Session of the Human Rights Council, the Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions marked a critical reflection on the enduring impact of unlawful killings and the rights of the families left behind. **Mr. Morris Tidball-Binz**, the Special Rapporteur, presented his thematic report on 18 June 2025, examining how families of victims often endure prolonged trauma, marginalisation, and denial of justice, while facing barriers to truth, accountability, and reparations. He called for States to adopt broader definitions of “family,” strengthen investigative mechanisms, and uphold protections against reprisals. The dialogue also featured the Rapporteur’s report on his official visit to Ukraine, where he documented serious violations committed in the context of the Russian Federation’s ongoing aggression. These included indiscriminate attacks on civilians, the use of human shields, and summary executions of both civilians and prisoners of war. **Mr. Tidball-Binz** commended Ukraine’s adoption of international forensic standards, including the Minnesota Protocol, and its commitment to documentation and justice.

While many States expressed strong support for the mandate, Ukraine urged the establishment of a tribunal on the crime of aggression. Others, including Palestine, raised concerns about unequal attention to ongoing unlawful killings in their regions. The dialogue

reaffirmed the centrality of families in justice processes and the international community's responsibility to protect them.

Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ) welcomes the report and reiterates its concern over extrajudicial executions in Ukraine, Palestine, Iran, Iraq, and Yemen. GICJ stresses that justice must extend to families and include truth, redress, and accountability.

[Click here to view the full discussion report](#)

Freedom of Expression in Crisis, a Risk for Democracy

Item 3: Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on freedom of expression

18 June 2025

By Skye Visser / GICJ

"Freedom of expression is one of the most valuable rights," emphasised the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, **Ms. Irene Khan**, during the interactive dialogue at the 6th meeting of the 59th session of the Human Rights Council on 18 June 2025.

The Special Rapporteur expressed the urgent need for states and their institutions to protect freedom of expression as it is the central pillar of democratic societies and a guarantor of a free and fair election process. However, the rise of digital technology and the spread of information manipulation in politically polarised contexts have created serious threats to democracy.



Across the meeting, many member states reaffirmed their commitment to this fundamental freedom as essential to safeguarding democratic processes. Despite these challenges, many states have expressed a strong commitment to implementing, upholding, and even expanding freedom of speech. However, other delegations repeatedly dismissed Ms. Khan's claims as biased and politically motivated. Despite broad consensus on the fundamental importance of freedom of expression, the Council revealed sharp geopolitical divides over how this right should be interpreted and enforced. Some delegations advocated for balanced and inclusive approaches that uphold transparency, digital literacy, and media freedom, particularly in electoral contexts. Others, however, expressed skepticism toward prevailing regulatory frameworks, arguing that they are often applied selectively or fail to adequately protect certain perspectives and communities. These divergent views underscore the complexity of advancing freedom of expression in an increasingly polarised and digitally mediated global environment. These tensions underscore the global challenge of protecting freedom of expression in a rapidly changing digital environment.

As the Human Rights Council continues its work, the dialogue reinforced the idea that protecting freedom of expression while navigating the legitimate concerns of disinformation and hate speech requires sustained cooperation, principled leadership, and an unwavering commitment to international human rights standards.

Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ) affirms that freedom of opinion and expression is a fundamental human right and a cornerstone of democratic society. As enshrined in Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), this right empowers individuals to seek, receive, and impart information freely. In light of the Special Rapporteur's findings, GICJ echoes deep concern about the global erosion of the right of freedom of expression, particularly through disinformation campaigns, hate speech, and state-sponsored efforts to suppress dissenting voices during elections. GICJ supports the Rapporteur's position that states must refrain from using misinformation control as a pretext to silence political opposition or marginalised communities.

[Click here to view the full discussion report](#)

Safe to Learn-Defending the Right to Safety in Education

Item 3: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Education

19 June 2025

By Shyla Gheek and Adam Seymour / GICJ

The session opened with the presentation of a report by the Special Rapporteur on the right to education, **Ms. Farida Shaheed**, who focused on the fundamental issue of safety in educational environments. The Special Rapporteur highlighted that students who experience discrimination based on gender, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender identity are especially vulnerable to violence and exclusion in schools. She stressed the importance of creating inclusive, rights-based educational environments where every child is protected from fear, stigma, and harm, regardless of their background or identity.



The Special Rapporteur emphasised that safety must be understood as integral to the right to education and not as an auxiliary concern. A safe educational environment is essential for students' physical, emotional, and psychosocial development. Her report proposed a comprehensive rights-based framework that includes legislative reform, accountability systems, teacher support, community engagement, and equitable investment in public education.

She stressed that growing privatisation threatens the integrity of public schooling and warned that poor teaching conditions combined with inadequate mental health support are undermining learning outcomes.

Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ) supports the findings of the Special Rapporteur and calls on all states to prioritise the safety and well-being of all learners. GICJ echoes the call for inclusive, publicly funded education systems that protect children from

violence and discrimination while upholding dignity and equal access to learning environments.

[Click here to view the full discussion report](#)

Lost lives, Forgotten Voices: Migration, Disappearance, and Human Rights Accountability

Item 3: Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

20 June 2025

By Patricia Mutebi Jjuuko/GICJ

On 20 June 2025, the 12th meeting of the 59th session of the Human Rights Council considered three reports of the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants including his thematic report on missing migrants and country visits report on Colombia and Panama (A/HRC/59/49) during an interactive dialogue. In his thematic report on missing migrants, **Gehad Madi**, Special Rapporteur, highlighted that migrant disappearances are driven by restrictive migration policies, the lack of safe and legal pathways, inadequate rescue efforts and failures in identification mechanisms.



In his mission report on the Darien region, Mr. Madi emphasised the severe risks migrants face, including violence, disappearance, and denial of essential services. While recognising positive efforts by local authorities and partners, he expressed deep concern over the growing securitisation and externalisation of migration governance, warning that such

measures often erode fundamental human rights protections. In the ensuing discussion, numerous states and organisations welcomed the Special Rapporteur's report and echoed concern over the alarming rise in migrant deaths and disappearances. States emphasised the need for cooperation across countries of origin, transit, and destination, stressing the importance of upholding human rights and strengthening regular migration pathways.

Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ) welcomes the Special Rapporteur's report and its urgent focus on the crisis of missing migrants. We remain deeply concerned about the alarming number of migrant disappearances, often under heartbreaking circumstances, including armed conflicts, human trafficking, arbitrary detention, perilous sea journeys and desert crossings. We strongly urge the international community to strengthen cooperation in the areas of search and rescue, identification, investigation, and accountability. A coordinated human rights-based approach is essential to ensure justice for victims and their families and to uphold the fundamental rights of all migrants, regardless of status.

[Click here to view the full discussion report](#)

Council Stresses Early Action to Avert Genocide

Item 2: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide

23 June 2025



By Carla Roa El Hage / GICJ

“The absence of accountability is itself an indicator of risk,” stated **Ms. Virginia Gamba, Acting Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide**, during the Interactive Dialogue at the 59th session of the Human Rights Council. This statement framed a powerful and urgent session in which Member States, regional blocs, and NGOs engaged in a wide-ranging discussion on the state of global atrocity prevention. Ms. Gamba’s update highlighted the proliferation of hate speech, shrinking civic space, impunity for past and present atrocity crimes, and a dangerous global erosion of trust in multilateral responses.

The dialogue drew attention to multiple ongoing crises, including ethnically motivated attacks in Sudan, the systematic abuse of the Rohingya population in Myanmar, and the devastating humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza. Several delegations, particularly from the Global South, explicitly referred to the situation in Gaza as a genocide and criticised the UN Office on Genocide Prevention for failing to publicly acknowledge this. Others emphasised the need to strengthen early warning mechanisms, increase technical support to states, and regulate online platforms that fuel incitement and dehumanisation.

A recurring theme was the inconsistency and selectivity of international responses to atrocity crimes. Many states criticised what they saw as double standards in the Council’s approach to prevention and accountability, warning that such inconsistency undermines the credibility of the entire human rights framework.

Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ) reaffirms that prevention must go beyond rhetoric. It requires early and equal action in response to credible threats, robust support to affected populations, and the political courage to hold all perpetrators accountable, regardless of geopolitical context. Genocide prevention is not a symbolic function of the UN system; it is a binding legal and moral imperative.

[Click here to view the full discussion report](#)

Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Conflict and Promoting Women’s Participation in Peace Processes

Annual full-day discussion on the human rights of women

24 June 2025

By Stefania Plougarli / GICJ

Amidst globally increasing conflict, women remain at the forefront of egregious human rights violations, facing multiple challenges at the intersection of gender, peace and security. For this reason, on the annual full-day discussion on the human rights of women on 24 June 2025, the UN's 59th session of the Human Rights Council focused on gender-based violence (GBV) against women and girls in conflict, post-conflict, and humanitarian settings; as well as the important role of women in diplomacy and peacebuilding processes. Building on last year's discussion focused on economic violence as a form of GBV, and the human rights economy, this event continued the conversation about gender equality and discrimination.



The first panel highlighted sexual violence as a systematic weapon of war, used to destabilise communities and exert patriarchal control. Experts, including the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Pramila Patten, and survivors' advocates exposed the horrific scale of this violence. They underscored the urgency of prosecuting gender persecution as a stand-alone crime and the necessity of survivor-centered reparations, while confronting the structural nature of impunity.

The second panel shifted the focus to women's political participation, peacebuilding, and representation in global diplomacy. Experts and stakeholders argued that without women's meaningful participation, peace is not sustainable.

Civil society voices echoed these concerns, warning of a growing anti-women backlash that is deepened by authoritarianism, digital misogyny and the erosion of international accountability. Women in conflict zones (particularly Indigenous women, refugee women,

and feminist defenders) remain at the intersection of multiple threats and therefore susceptible to increased violence.

Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ) strongly condemns the use of sexual violence against women and girls in conflict settings as a weapon of war, and remains committed to amplifying survivor's voices, ensuring accountability under international law, and ensuring women's participation in all parts of decision-making processes.

[Click here to view the full discussion report](#)

A more equitable world for women and girls

Item 3: Interactive Dialogue with the Working Group on Discrimination Against Women and Girls

24 June 2025

By Rose Chiara Atieno / GICJ

The 59th session of the Human Rights Council organised a day dedicated to the annual day for women in which an interactive dialogue on the discrimination against women and girls took place. During the 13th, 14th, and 15th meeting of the council, the working group and states voiced their growing concerns over the various discrimination against women and girls.



In this meeting, the member of the working group, **Ms. Haina Lu**, spoke on behalf of the working group and presented the groups findings in which they expressed concerns over the increase in the use of sexual violence as a method of war, gender-based violence and discrimination in care work. There was a consensus of agreement that there is concern over the use of sexual violence as a method of war, gender-based violence and discrimination in care work with the overall conversation being skewed towards concern over care work. During the meeting, Ms. Haina Lu and states' representatives reaffirmed the idea that care and support remain at the heart and foundations of families and of society and as such should be shared responsibilities.

Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ) welcomes the recommendations made by the working group and is committed to the fight against discrimination against women and girls. We further assert that gender equality is essential to the protection and promotion of human rights.

[Click here to view the full discussion report](#)

Unfinished Business - Human Rights concerns in Burundi

Item 4: Interactive Dialogue on the oral update of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Burundi

26 June 2025

By Teboho Mosebo/ GICJ

The 59th Session of the Human Rights Council's Interactive Dialogue on Burundi witnessed a multifaceted discussion on the country's human rights situation. The Special Rapporteur on Burundi, Fortune Gaetan Zongo, provided an oral update, highlighting concerns regarding the independence and impartiality of the judicial system, abusive land practices targeting vulnerable populations, and restrictions on civic space. The update underscored the need for meaningful reforms to address these challenges.

The interactive dialogue revealed divergent perspectives among states. Some states commended Burundi's efforts to improve its human rights situation, emphasising the importance of respecting national sovereignty and countering misinformation. These States highlighted Burundi's progress in promoting human rights and encouraged continued international cooperation to support the country's endeavours. In contrast, other States

expressed deep concern about the situation in Burundi, criticising the judicial system, electoral processes, and civic space. While some delegates raised concern over Burundi's human rights record, others states defended Burundi's sovereignty and acknowledged efforts by the government to address human rights challenges.



The dialogue also featured varied perspectives from Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs). Some NGOs supported Burundi's progress, acknowledging the country's efforts to promote human rights. Others echoed the concerns raised by Mr. Zongo, emphasising the need for meaningful reforms and international support to address the human rights challenges in Burundi.

Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ) notes the complexity of the discussion, underscoring the need for continued international cooperation and support to address human rights challenges in Burundi. GICJ emphasises the importance of promoting human rights, dignity, and justice for all Burundians, and reiterates its commitment to supporting efforts to advance human rights and justice in Burundi and beyond.

[Click here to view the full discussion report](#)

Two Kinds of Justice? Confronting Inequality in Legal Systems

Item 3: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers

25 June 2025

By Elina Riznic / GICJ

The 59th Session of the Human Rights Council hosted an interactive dialogue with Ms. Margaret Satterthwaite, the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers. Her report focused on her visit to Chile from 29 July to 9 August 2024, which highlighted both the progress and persistent inequalities in the country's justice system. While acknowledging Chile's strong institutions and the independence of its judiciary, she noted that many Chileans perceive a "dual justice system": one for the wealthy and another for the poor.



Ms. Satterthwaite also warned about a global surge in attacks against legal professionals, often aimed at silencing those defending the rights of the marginalised. She emphasised that disciplinary and criminal proceedings are increasingly used to punish independent legal actors, especially those challenging state narratives or defending unpopular causes. Delegations including the EU, Switzerland, Uruguay, and Indonesia expressed support for the Rapporteur's findings, underlining the role of lawyers in defending the rule of law and democratic principles. Concern was raised over reprisals, digital surveillance, and political interference in judicial systems.

Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ) echoes the Special Rapporteur's urgent calls to uphold the independence of legal professionals and ensure universal access to justice. We stress that legal systems must not replicate societal inequities and that legal professionals must be protected from political, legal, and physical threats.

[Click here to view the full discussion report](#)

The Erosion of Human Rights in Belarus

Item 4: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights in Belarus

26 June 2025



By Lorenzo Bersellini / GICJ

Freedom of association, expression and peaceful assembly are completely denied. Forms of domestic and transnational repression of every critical voice that speaks up against the regime are the norm. Ill-treatment of more than 1,200 political prisoners, including death in custody, torture and prolonged incommunicado detention, are systematically recorded. These are only some of the violations that the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights Situation in Belarus, Mr. Nils Muižnieks, highlighted during the interactive dialogue on 26 June 2025 during the 59th Human Rights Council Session.

During the dialogue, multiple delegations delivered their statements on the basis of the last report published by the Special Rapporteur (A/HRC/59/59), in which he documented the

deteriorating human rights situation in the country, focusing in particular on the ill-treatment of people detained on political grounds and on the severe restrictions to civil and political rights. Because of this, various delegations criticised Belarus' lack of compliance with their international obligation and the total denial of the freedom of assembly, expression, and opinion. Delegates also showed concern for the transnational repression targeting Belarusians in exile and living abroad, as well as for the fate of the more than thousand still unlawfully detained prisoners.

Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ) stands with all victims of repression in Belarus and around the world, and denounces the gross violations suffered by political prisoners in penitentiary facilities. We call on the Council to continue monitoring the human rights situation in Belarus. We also advocate for the unconditional release of all political prisoners and for the protection and respect of human rights in the country.

[Click here to view the full discussion report](#)

Myanmar's Echoes of Despair - A Call for Global Action

Item 4: Enhanced interactive dialogue on the High Commissioner's report and oral update of the Special Rapporteur on Myanmar

27 June 2025

By Matilde Gamba / GICJ

On 27 June 2025, during the 19th meeting of the 59th Session of the Human Rights Council, country delegates convened for an Enhanced Interactive Dialogue on the human rights situation in Myanmar. During the discussion, **Mr. Volker Türk**, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and Mr. Thomas Andrews, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, presented their latest findings and urgent updates on the country's deteriorating human rights situation, stressing the alarming humanitarian consequences of Myanmar military junta's ongoing violence against civilians.

Following the devastating 7.7-magnitude earthquake that struck Myanmar in March 2025, that displaced millions and killed thousands, the Tatmadaw, the country's military, escalated its attacks on civilians, restricting humanitarian aid even in areas protected by ceasefires. Both experts underscored that the junta has continued to operate and perpetrate campaigns of repression, abuse, arbitrary detentions, and indiscriminate airstrikes with impunity. The High Commissioner and the Special Rapporteur called for robust international action,

including an arms embargo, sanctions on aviation fuel, and a renewed push for accountability through international mechanisms. Civil society members, human rights defenders, and political prisoner survivors, including Ms. Zue Padonmar, Mr. Bo Kyi, and Ms. Noor Aziza, powerfully highlighted the suffering and resilience of the people facing the junta's indiscriminate crimes and abuses.



The interactive dialogue underscored that the situation in Myanmar is not merely a domestic political crisis but a profound humanitarian emergency and international legal concern. Western and regional democracies unanimously condemned the junta's actions and violence, reinforcing the need for accountability and supporting international justice mechanisms. By strongly supporting the High Commissioner's recommendations, they underscored the importance of denying the junta's legitimacy, particularly in light of the regime's planned 2025 elections, and stressed the urgency of sustained aid, inclusive dialogue, and ceasefire adherence.

Conversely, other countries such as Belarus, Russia, and China defended the principle of non-interference, that of avoiding dealing with Myanmar's "internal affairs" and rejecting country-specific mandates, while they criticised the Western politicisation of the Human Rights Council.

Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ) firmly supports the recommendations put forward by the High Commissioner and the Special Rapporteur. GICJ reiterates its condemnation of the ongoing violence and systematic human rights abuses in Myanmar perpetrated by the military. It urges the international community to reject political

complacency and maintain strong pressure on the junta to ensure accountability for human rights violations and support all efforts for a democratic and inclusive Myanmar.

[Click here to view the full discussion report](#)

Growing concerns regarding human rights violations in Venezuela

Item 4: Interactive Dialogue on the High Commissioner's report on the situation of human rights in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

27 June 2025



By Jennifer Kalushi / GICJ

During the 59th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council an Interactive Dialogue on the human rights situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela was held on 27 June 2025. The session took place amid ongoing political repression, a deepening humanitarian crisis, and heightened concerns surrounding the July 2024 presidential elections.

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, **Volker Türk**, presented a report detailing serious and persistent human rights violations, including arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances, and the criminalisation of civil society. He expressed particular concern over the use of the judiciary as a tool of repression, Venezuela's limited cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and the enforcement of laws restricting non-governmental organisations.

The High Commissioner urged the Venezuelan government to lift disqualifications against opposition candidates ahead of the 2025 presidential elections and to renew the Letter of Understanding that governs OHCHR's presence in Caracas.

During the dialogue, regional and international actors echoed these concerns, calling for full cooperation from Venezuelan authorities. They demanded the release of political prisoners, the repeal of repressive legislation, and the restoration of civil and political freedoms. Civil society representatives emphasised the growing risks faced by human rights defenders and journalists and strongly advocated for the continued work of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Venezuela.

Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ) foregrounded the ongoing pattern of systemic repression and urged the Council to maintain robust oversight through OHCHR and the Fact-Finding Mission. GICJ called on the Venezuelan government to enable international cooperation, restore civic space, and uphold the rule of law and democratic norms.

[Click here to view the full discussion report](#)

The Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the context of Climate Change

Item 3: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on climate change

30 June 2025

By Prishika Adhira Bhoyroo / GICJ

The new global economy has provoked a significant number of negative effects on the overall wellbeing of our Earth particularly in regards to its climate. Accordingly, on 30 June 2025, the Human Rights Council convened to discuss the report (A/HRC/59/42) of Ms. Elisa Morgera, the Special Rapporteur (SR) on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change.



During the dialogue, she raised concerns about the global dependency on fossil fuels, namely heightening the need for economies across the world to develop and adopt strategies towards defossilisation. Interestingly, the dialogue was centred around two contrasting viewpoints: some States agreed with the SR's report and argued in favor of defossilisation. However, other States firmly maintained their position and pointed out that fossil fuels remain a main source of revenue for many low and middle-income states.

Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ) expresses deep concern for the impacts of climate change on the livelihood of humans across the world. As such, GICJ welcomes and aligns with the report of the SR by recognising the urgency for global appeal to implement defossilisation strategies and assessing energy demands. Moreover, we urge the Council, as well as Member States, to take action to ensure effective human rights protection from the negative impacts of climate change.

[Click here to view the full discussion report](#)

Human Rights Violations in Ukraine's Temporarily Occupied Territories

Item 10: Interactive Dialogue on oral presentation of the High Commissioner on Ukraine and interim report of SG on human rights on Crimea

3 July 2025

By Andrea Pantazi / GICJ

During the 59th Session of the UN Human Rights Council, the Assistant Secretary-General presented the Secretary-General's interim report on the human rights situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, including Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. The presentation triggered widespread condemnation of Russia's continued violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) and international human rights law (IHRL).



The report details alarming trends such as the forced conscription of Ukrainian civilians, indoctrination of children, arbitrary detention, torture, sexual violence, and the systemic repression of Ukrainian identity. Numerous states and NGOs reiterated their support for Ukraine's territorial integrity, called for justice and accountability, and condemned Russia's indiscriminate drone attacks on civilians and infrastructure. The Russian Federation did not attend the dialogue, reflecting a continued disregard for the Council's mechanisms.

Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ) welcomes the report and reiterates its concern over the human rights and humanitarian law abuses in Ukraine.

[Click here to view the full discussion report](#)

From economy of occupation to economy of genocide

Item 7: Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on OPT

3 July 2025

By Samantha Rodríguez Santillán / GICJ

In her latest report (A/HRC/59/23), Francesca Albanese, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, exposes the central role of private and state-linked corporate actors in sustaining Israel's prolonged occupation and the escalating violence in Gaza. The report frames the Israeli regime as one of settler-colonial apartheid, supported not only through political and military means but also through an expansive economic system that she refers to as an "economy of genocide".



During the discussion, groups of states and other states expressed their support to the Special Rapporteur's work, who is facing serious pressure both online and from states - like the USA - imposing sanctions on her. Member states showed concern for the involvement of powerful corporations in Palestine as shown in the report, calling on them to respect principles such as Due Diligence and Corporate Responsibility. Member states also urged Israel and complicit states to uphold the rulings of the ICJ, to stop harming civilians and put an end to the use of starvation as a method of warfare.

Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ) fully supports the work of the Special Rapporteur, Francesca Albanese, and commends her courage in naming all actors involved

in the ongoing genocide in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Her report is a critical warning about the erosion of international law and the structural role that economic interests play in sustaining a regime of apartheid and systemic violence.

[Click here to view the full discussion report](#)

Intersectionality from a Racial Justice Perspective

Item 9: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Racism

3 July 2025

By Jamel Nampijja / GICJ

Ms. K. P. Ashwini, the Special Rapporteur (SR) on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance, presented three reports during the Interactive Dialogue held on 3 July 2025, at the 27th and 28th meetings of the 59th session of the Human Rights Council.

The first Report focused on the **County Visit to Brazil**, highlighting systemic racism and the urgent need for reparative justice for Afro-Brazilian communities, Indigenous peoples, and other marginalised groups affected by historical injustices.



The second Report explored **intersectionality as a crucial framework** for achieving racial justice. It emphasised that tackling racism requires understanding its intersection with other

forms of discrimination, including gender, disability, and migration status, and called for this approach to be integrated into laws and policies.

The third Report criticised **the glorification of Nazism** as a legal and moral imperative, documenting the rise of neo-Nazi ideologies and urging Member States to strengthen legal measures to combat such extremist views.

During the dialogue, representatives from various Member States and civil society organisations engaged with the reports, emphasising the importance of an intersectional approach to effectively address discrimination and xenophobia. They also highlighted progress in implementing the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA) while noting ongoing challenges.

Representatives called for stronger legal protections against far-right extremism and better data collection to support evidence-based policies. Civil society groups urged prioritising intersectionality in human rights obligations and emphasised the need for public education to effect meaningful change.

Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ) supports the Special Rapporteur's reports and emphasises that achieving racial justice requires a transformative, intersectional approach that addresses interconnected systems of inequality. GICJ calls on Member States, UN bodies, and civil society to treat intersectionality as essential to fulfilling international human rights commitments.

[Click here to view the full discussion report](#)

Concerning Humanitarian Situation in the Central African Republic

Item 10: Interactive dialogue on the oral update of the Independent Expert on Central African Republic

4 July 2025

By Eva Claeys / GICJ

While progress has been made, the Central African Republic (CAR) remains deeply entrenched in a concerning state. Basic needs of millions of citizens are not met, human rights' violations such as child soldier recruitment and gender-based violence are widespread, armed groups terrorise the population, and impunity and insecurity are current key issues. That is what the Independent Expert (IE) on the Central African Republic has

highlighted during the interactive dialogue on 26 June 2025 at the 59th Human Rights Council.

Multiple delegations expressed concern over the oral update given by the IE. Although many countries welcomed the government's commitment to its country with the help of international mechanisms, they still emphasised the need for increased protection of civilians, justice for victims of all kinds of abuses, and the disarmament of armed groups. Several states pointed out the importance of dealing with gender-based violence, improving access to humanitarian aid as well as ensuring the return of displaced populations. The IE also deemed foreign involvement in the country as a destabilising factor and called for accountability as well as respect of international law.



Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ) echoes the concern of the IE regarding the deeply alarming human rights situation taking place in the Central African Republic. GICJ stands with all victims of armed violence, gender-based violence as well as displacement, and calls out the widespread impunity of actors involved in the conflict. We call on the HRC and the international community to keep monitoring the situation, support transitional justice mechanisms and ensure the protection of populations. We also urge the CAR government to continue and increase cooperation with the UN and build a concrete plan in order to ensure accountability, peace and the respect of basic human rights.

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Resolutions

A Promising Avenue for Human Rights - Resolution A/HRC/59/L.9 Adopted

By Arwa Akbar / GICJ

Cuba introduced Resolution A/HRC/59/L.9 during the 31st Meeting of the 59th Session of the Human Rights Council on 7 July 2025. The resolution sought to emphasise the fundamental status of international solidarity as a duty for states, citing the United Nations Millennium Declaration, in championing human rights. The resolution recalls the international cooperation in the face of the COVID-19 crisis and calls for an amplified response towards the contemporary global structural issues. These include but are not limited to, poverty, food insecurity and gender issues.

The resolution recognises the disparate outcomes of globalisation on global South countries. It urges for the equitable distribution of burdens and costs to the international community to facilitate continued action towards the development of developing states, citing article 4 of the Declaration on the Right to Development. A/HRC/59/L.9 proclaims the need for mutual respect among states and recognition of state sovereignty, making reference to the Charter of the United Nations.

The resolution expresses the need for increased financial aid from states towards UN agencies commitment to this mission and the Independent Expert's mandate. It highlights the need for states to commit to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and encourages the Independent Expert to continue its analysis on the best practices of international solidarity.

During the discussion of the resolution submitted by Cuba, states expressed their supportive stance, with the speaker for China reiterating, 'Cooperation not confrontation.' 27 countries voted in favour of the resolution, with supportive statements from Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Algeria, Mexico, South Africa and Bolivia. Out of 16 countries who voted against the resolution, the European Union - represented by Spain- and Japan, expressed their concerns over the definition of solidarity and whether the Council was the appropriate body to govern the rights of individuals. 4 countries abstained from voting, with Chile's apprehension stemming for the unclear status of solidarity as a right.

Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ) supports the passing of this resolution, highlighting the important relationship between human rights and international solidarity. GICJ recognises that international solidarity facilitates this mission and provides avenues for

international cooperation that will effectively tackle instances of human rights violations and aid in global development.

Turning Privilege to Right, Correcting the Place of Education in the World

By Arwa Akbar / GICJ

Resolution A/HRC/59/L.11 was adopted without a vote on 7 July 2025 during the 31st Meeting of the 59th Session of Human Rights Council. The resolution seeks to promote the steps towards and garner the commitment from Member states to guarantee the right to education globally. The resolution calls to remedy the disparaging number of 754 million illiterate young persons and adults - women who make up two thirds of this population - and the approximately over 250 million children, youth and adolescents who are not enrolled in formal education.

During the discussion, the speaker for Portugal introduced the resolution and highlighted the significance of the issue, citing 'the transformative effect of education across societies', a sentiment echoed throughout the Council. Another recurrent theme was the need to mitigate barriers to and discrimination in education. The discussion was centered on the promising effects of the resolution's proposed recommendations, most notably being the use of technology in institutions and the implementation of food programmes to counteract these issues. The Council focused its lens on the world's children with the delegate of South Africa stating 'the right to education remains a distant dream for millions of children across the globe'. He compellingly referenced the ongoing human rights crisis in Gaza, acknowledging the complete and total obliteration of the Occupied Palestinian Territories' educational system. The representative of Spain further reiterated the need for the resolution by acknowledging the destruction of 70% of all schools in Gaza.

Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ) condemns the human rights violations towards the people of Palestine and encourages action from both the international community and the UN major bodies to guarantee global access to and security of education. GICJ further encourages Member states to utilise the necessary state resources to ensure total fulfillment of the recommendations of the resolution. GICJ acknowledges that it is the sacrosanct duty of States to ensure the equitable promotion of the principles of human rights for all state individuals. States can most effectively achieve this by upholding the tenets of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and working toward the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The committed adoption of resolution A/HRC/59/L.11

provides an avenue to do so, as the resolution directly addresses Article 26 championing the right to education and Goal 4 focusing on quality education.

A renewed commitment to women and girls

By Rose Chiara Atieno / GICJ

“States must demonstrate their strong commitment to end all forms of discrimination against women and girls”, the Canadian delegation urged the council and respective states while introducing draft resolution L.24/Rev.1 on 8 July 2025. The resolution, which was adopted without a vote during the 33rd meeting of the 59th Session of the Human Rights Council, was presented with the aim of tackling the issues of violence against women and girls, such as gender-based violence, and addressing their root causes. It was reminded that women and girls around the world continue to face widespread discrimination, and the prevalence of violence against them remains deeply concerning, with 1 in 3 women experiencing some form of violence in their lifetime.

Indeed, one of the main sentiments expressed in the resolution was concern. Concern for the root causes of violence against women and concern for the overwhelming burden women face economically, domestically, and socially. In response to the ongoing and alarming levels of violence against women and girls, the mandate of the special rapporteur on violence against women and girls was renewed for an additional 3 years. To further combat gender-based violence, the resolution aims to end impunity, ensure accountability for perpetrators, and guarantee that women and girls have meaningful access to justice. Following the discussion with the working group on discrimination against women and girls, the resolution stipulated that states address the burden on women and girls in care work by adopting an approach that promotes shared responsibility.

“This resolution is a call for all states to do better”: **Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ)** supports ongoing efforts to address the urgent issue of violence against women and girls and firmly condemns all forms of discrimination against them. We also welcome the extension of the mandate of the special rapporteur on violence against women and girls and reaffirm our commitment to advocating for the full realisation of their rights.

Protecting and Empowering Children in the Digital Space

By Lorenzo Bersellini / GICJ

From online exploitation and cyberbullying to misinformation and harmful contents, the threats children face online are multifaceted and demand coordinated efforts to respond to them. With this in mind, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, alongside the core group comprising Algeria, Azerbaijan, Kuwait, Pakistan and Viet Nam, introduced before the Human Rights Council draft resolution L.19/Rev 1 on the protection and empowerment of children in the digital space. As the delegates of both Saudi Arabia and Vietnam illustrated in their oral presentation on 8 July 2025, the resolution aims to strengthen international cooperation, foster capacity building and favor exchange of best practices and resources to allow each state, in particular developing ones, to better protect their children in the digital arena.

Both the rights of children and the priorities and needs of states were upheld as central aspects in the present resolution. For this reason, multiple countries positioned themselves in favor of the draft, as they believe it outlines guidelines for concrete action and capacity building in the spirit of Item 10 of the Council's agenda. Delegates that delivered statements in favor of the resolution included those of Cuba, Ethiopia, China, Bangladesh and Sudan.

Although supportive of the resolution, the delegate of Spain, speaking on behalf of the EU countries members of the Council, raised some concerns about the little reliance of the draft on the existing and relevant work done by the Council, the General Assembly (GA) and the Committee on the Right of the Child (CRC) on the matter. The delegate cited HRC Resolution 51/10 on countering cyberbullying and General Comments 25 by the CRC as examples that could have been incorporated in the text. Despite this, the representative of Spain thanked the core group for their work and expressed his country and the EU's support to the resolution.

Therefore, considering that no formal request for a vote was made, the resolution was adopted by consensus.

Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ) welcomes the adoption of this resolution on a crucial matter such as the protection of the rights of children in the digital space. Indeed, more needs to be done to ensure that children do not fall victim to the multiple threats they face in the digital environment and that, at the same time, they can all enjoy access and exploit the countless possibilities for growth they are offered online. We encourage the Council to thus follow and guarantee the effective implementation of this resolution.

Protecting the Rohingya: UNHRC Adopts Landmark Resolution on Myanmar

By Matilde Gamba / GICJ

At its 59th session, the Human Rights Council adopted Resolution A/HRC/59/L.21 on the situation of human rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar. Led by Pakistan on behalf of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the resolution condemns the widespread and grave human rights violations committed by the Myanmar military and other armed groups against Rohingya and other ethnic minorities. These include forced displacement, sexual violence, use of human shields, indiscriminate shelling, and denial of citizenship.

The resolution urges Myanmar to cease all hostilities, cooperate with UN mechanisms, and uphold international law. It reinforces the need to address the root causes of the crisis, including systemic discrimination, statelessness, and lack of accountability. Specific demands include repealing the 1982 Citizenship Law, allowing humanitarian access, and enabling the voluntary, safe, and dignified return of over 1.5 million forcibly displaced Rohingya. The resolution also expresses grave concern over reduced humanitarian aid in Bangladesh and calls for international burden-sharing.

During the discussion, Bangladesh voiced deep concern over the Myanmar military's ongoing campaign of violence in Rakhine State and emphasised the unsustainable burden of hosting over one million Rohingya refugees. The Netherlands reaffirmed the importance of accountability through the ICC and ICJ, while Germany underlined the need to combat hate speech and support durable solutions based on justice and inclusion. Indonesia, speaking on behalf of ASEAN, reiterated support for the Five-Point Consensus and encouraged inclusive dialogue with all communities in Myanmar. Qatar and Kuwait called for intensified international cooperation to prevent further atrocities. The United States and Canada praised the work of the Independent Investigative Mechanism and reaffirmed the need to uphold the principle of non-refoulement.

The resolution was adopted by consensus, demonstrating the Human Rights Council's unified stance on the urgent need for justice, accountability, and the protection of minorities in Myanmar.

Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ) welcomes the adoption of this strong resolution. We echo its call for immediate action to end the suffering of the Rohingya and for Myanmar to comply with international human rights standards. GICJ stresses the need to

uphold the principle of non-refoulement, ensure sustainable solutions for displaced persons, and hold all perpetrators accountable.

Resolution A/HRC/59/L.16 Impact of arms transfer on Human Rights

By Rose Chiara Atieno / GICJ

At the end of the 59th session, the Human Rights Council adopted resolution A/HRC/59/L.16, which addressed the impact of arms transfer on Human Rights. This resolution, sponsored by Ecuador, Peru, and other states, calls for enhanced efforts by states to fulfill their obligations to international law and international humanitarian law.

Cosponsors of the resolutions, such as South Africa and Ecuador, reaffirmed their support of this resolution, emphasising the urgent need for such a resolution given the different crises in the world, citing the Palestine occupation as one of them. During the discussion, numerous states reminded the council that they have obligations under international law to ensure that all transfers of arms must not be used to cause unnecessary harm.

Additionally, this resolution stresses the importance of mitigating and preventing devastating human rights impacts of arms transfer, especially reminding states and third parties the international principles they must abide by. The resolution also emphasises that states and businesses have an obligation to uphold human rights in their conduct of business.

During the discussion, all members that took the floor argued in favor of the importance of this resolution - with none dissenting its timeliness. At the end of the meeting, the resolution was adopted with no vote, meaning by consensus, reasserting the council's continued commitment to this matter.

Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ) aligns with the adoption of this resolution, as it addresses a matter of critical importance, particularly considering the current geopolitical climate and the different ongoing humanitarian crises in which the impact of arms transfer is being witnessed. Additionally, we condemn the transfer of arms that are being used in breach of international law, international humanitarian law and human rights law. We urge states to implement robust oversight measures to ensure that their arm transfers do not lead to the violations of international law or the loss of civilian life.

A Resolution for Resilience – HRC Adopts Resolution on Ukraine Under Item 10

By Andrea Pantazi / GICJ

On 8 July 2025, during the 33rd meeting of its 59th Session, the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) adopted resolution A/HRC/59/L.3 under Item 10. The resolution, as explained by the Ukrainian representative, reaffirms its commitment to supporting Ukraine in the promotion and protection of human rights amid ongoing challenges caused by the Russian aggression. The resolution is grounded in the principles of the UN Charter, international human rights law and humanitarian law.

The resolution acknowledges Ukraine's primary responsibility to uphold human rights and recognises both the progress made and the serious challenges that remain. It appreciates the continued technical assistance provided by the OHCHR, especially through its monitoring missions. It also commends Ukraine's cooperation with OHCHR and other international mechanisms, and its increased commitment to human rights. Importantly, the resolution welcomes the oral presentations and reports by the OHCHR. These reports are considered essential for assessing Ukraine's human rights needs and ensuring effective technical assistance. Finally, the resolution underscores the Council's role in preventing human rights violations through dialogue and cooperation, as well as its responsibility to respond promptly to emergencies.

Many Member States commended the draft resolution, and further recognised Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine as a clear violation of international law. They called for continued monitoring by the Council. Importantly, they noted that the resolution regards human rights violations in Ukraine, and does not actively target third parties, as other Member States have stated in the earlier interactive dialogues. However, others differed in their opinion, stating that the HRC should be objective and impartial, and should not politicise human rights. Moreover, others stated that the HRC forum was not appropriate for these talks.

In the voting, only two Member States voted against the resolution, 28 Member States voted in favour, and 17 abstained. Therefore, draft resolution L.3 was adopted.

Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ) welcomes the adoption of the resolution and reiterates its deep concern over the deteriorating human rights situation in Ukraine. GICJ urges the international community to support victim-centred accountability mechanisms and ensure that Ukrainian civil society, culture and identity are protected and preserved.

Protecting Human Rights: UNHRC Adopts Resolution on Corruption

By Ahmed Wahbi / GICJ

At its 59th session, the Human Rights Council adopted Resolution A/HRC/59/L.6 on the negative impact of corruption on human rights. Morocco, Argentina, Austria, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Poland and the United Kingdom co-sponsored the text. The resolution condemned corruption's corrosive effect on governance, public trust and delivery of basic services. It noted that corruption diverted resources meant for health, education and social welfare and that marginalised groups bore the heaviest burden.

The resolution called on States to ratify and implement the United Nations Convention against Corruption and to reinforce national measures against graft. It demanded legal guarantees for civil society, journalists and whistle-blowers and it instructed the Advisory Committee to prepare a study that will issue clear guidelines on how States can respect human rights while they fight corruption. It urged use of open data and digital tools to promote transparency and it invited UNODC and OHCHR to coordinate technical support and capacity development for States in need.

Morocco introduced the draft text and pointed to its 2011 constitution and its legal framework to punish financial crime and grant public access to information. Ethiopia warned that entrenched graft siphons off funds vital for development and harms persons at risk; it called for asset recovery and cross-border cooperation. Belgium stressed that corruption erodes the rule of law and citizens' faith in public institutions and it urged closer work with UNODC and human rights bodies. Ghana recalled its Office of the Special Prosecutor and its ratification of global and regional anti-corruption treaties; it insisted on open civic space for accountability. Cuba backed the text and rejected politicisation of corruption issues; it asked States to grant technical aid within a spirit of solidarity.

The Council adopted the resolution by consensus, showing unified resolve to tackle corruption as a barrier to human rights and sustainable development.

Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ) welcomes the adoption of this resolution. We back the Council's call for human rights-centred anti-corruption strategies, legal protection for activists and journalists, and targeted support for States that confront systemic

graft. GICJ urges swift action on the Advisory Committee study, full application of the resolution's measures and firm steps to hold all perpetrators to account.

Resolution A/HRC/59/L.17 concerning Human Rights and Climate Change

By Stefania Plougarli / GICJ

During its 59th Session on the 8th July 2025 the UN Human Rights Council formally adopted Resolution A/HRC/59/L.17 on the issue of Human Rights and Climate Change. The resolution, which was presented by the states of Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, the Philippines, Samoa and Viet Nam, expressed deep concern about the worsening situation of climate change worldwide, reaffirming the importance of tackling this issue in a comprehensive manner.

The various recommended actions and measures of the resolution included a general call of encouragement for States to sign the Paris Agreement and uphold already signed climate goals, as well as rapidly cutting global emissions and enhancing international cooperation around financing, technology and capacity building. In this light the resolution urged developed countries to take the lead in developing pathways to sustainable climate financing and financial assistance; encouraging also international financial institutions, banks, and corporations to participate, and to upkeep their commitments formulated in the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. It further urged States to adopt new gender and disability inclusive climate change policies aimed at mitigation and adaptation, closely aligning itself with the responsibility to "leave no one behind" according to the Sustainable Development Goals Agenda 2030. A focus of the resolution laid on recognising the critical connection of the effects of climate change negatively impacting the enjoyment of all human rights globally, which is why it emphasised the importance of committing to comprehensive, inclusive, and international action. In this context the resolution also recognised the importance of meaningful participation of civil society in climate action, the work of the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms in the context of climate change.

Many states expressed support for the resolution, with the Arab Group, Gambia, and Ethiopia emphasizing the urgent need for equitable climate finance, support for vulnerable countries, and recognition of climate justice principles. Other states like Brazil or Kenya highlighted the disproportionate impact of climate change on developing nations and called for international cooperation, just transitions, and respect for national circumstances. In

contrast, Iceland expressed regret over specific revisions and overlaps with discussions in other forums, cautioning against undermining obligations under the Paris Agreement.

Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ) welcomes the adoption of resolution A/HRC/59/L.17, and reaffirms its commitment to advocating for the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change. It especially commends the council for highlighting the important role of civil society in the fight against climate change and its effects on the lives of vulnerable communities. GICJ urges the international community to oblige with its responsibilities of the Paris Agreement and to do more to reach the SDGs in due time.

Conclusions and Reflections

The conclusion of the 59th Session of the Human Rights Council on 8 July - one day before its anticipated end - is indicative of the paradox that the UN Human Rights system is facing. Although human rights violations and desperate situations are on the rise across the globe - mainly driven by conflict, state violence, discrimination of multiple forms and extreme weather conditions - the main international and diplomatic forum mandated to discuss and find solutions to these issues was dissolved one day in advance.

Children starve to death or die under bombs; civilians continue to unjustly and unlawfully being killed; families are torn apart; people are targeted because of their identity; economic and social inequalities widen; the world has surpassed three planetary boundaries; freedom of opinion, assembly and expression are under attack from all directions and actors; hatred spreads. There is an ever increasing list of agenda items that the Council could and should tackle. And yet the 59th session ended earlier than expected and has seen a reduction in the duration of its meetings, mainly at the expense of NGOs and civil society, whereas the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is forced to terminate its employers' contract, reduce their activity on the ground where it matters the most, and suspend some of the mandates entrusted to the Council.

This seemingly paradoxical situation is explained by an alarming reality: as funding for the OHCHR and the Council diminish, invaluable resources are diverted towards rearmament. Data speaks for itself: in 2024, the UN Human Rights' total budget was US\$438.9 million, whereas military expenditures reached its peak at US\$ 2.7 trillion. In the same year, the total

allotment of the UN regular budget to the UN Human Rights system was reduced compared to 2023, whereas military spending increased by 9.4%. These are not just numbers, they are instead one of the reasons why people in Palestine, Ukraine, Myanmar, Sudan, DRC, Iraq, South Sudan continue to suffer.

It appears that the world finds itself crossing through the winter of human rights and peace, in which the shiny days of multilateral cooperation, development, and respect become shorter, while in turn the gelid nights of war, injustice, and violence expand.

However, although it seems so far away, there are still people devoting their time, energies, and resources to push the world closer to its spring, to a better season in its history. Gathered at the 59th session of the Council, UN's Special Procedures, multiple state delegations and representatives of NGOs and civil society, including GICJ, worked intensively to discuss and take action to help the plight of people suffering across the globe. To this end, 26 resolutions were adopted by the Council, varying from the protection and empowerment of children in the digital space to the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls and female genital mutilation; from the safety of journalists to the situation of Rohingyas in Myanmar. During the course of 34 meetings, reports were presented on the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Ukraine, Belarus, Central African Republic, Venezuela and many other thematic issues, including women rights, education and independence of lawyers.

Therefore, Geneva International Centre for Justice congratulates the efforts of the Council, its mandate-holders and the OHCHR for their renewed commitment to the cause of human rights and peace. Despite the evident external limitations, the four-weeks 59th session of the Human Rights Council allowed states and civil society to come together and try to bridge their different positions to better protect, respect, and fulfill human rights. We remain deeply concerned, however, by the protracted suffering of multiple peoples, especially in Palestine, Myanmar, Iraq, Ukraine, the DRC, and Sudan. Going beyond words and taking concrete action to stop the atrocities inflicted among these and other people is a prerogative for the international community, without which any other discussion remains void. Nevertheless, to avoid repeating the same situations in the future, we believe that more needs to be done to address the structural injustices that lead to conflict and division, such as inequalities among and within nations, the marginalisation of minorities, the erosion of fundamental democratic values and the exacerbation of adverse climate change. GICJ stands ready to continue to contribute through its work to such goals and is eager to further its engagement with the Human Rights Council in its upcoming sessions.

GICJ would like to extend its thanks and appreciation to its collaborators, including interns and volunteers, for their hard work during the session. Participating at the Human Rights Council and other UN bodies is a big honour and responsibility, as well as a great learning opportunity given the significant amount of work delivered by everyone involved.

For those interested in human rights and GICJ activities, we encourage you to look into the work of our collaborators, which includes written reports and oral statements.

If you want to join our team and contribute to the work of the organisation, you can write to internships@gicj.org.

Click on the images below to read more about our team and their backgrounds!



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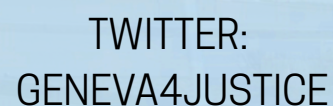
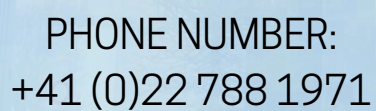
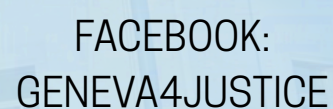
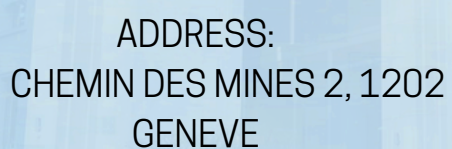
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