
New York Roundtable: Human Rights, Prevention and Peace

New York, 20 November 2023

Joint Statement by the Human Rights / Conflict Prevention Caucus New York

Excellencies, High Commissioner for Human Rights, Under Secretary-General, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to thank the OHCHR for organizing this important roundtable and the esteemed panelists for their insightful contributions.

I have the honor to deliver these remarks on behalf of the Human Rights/Conflict Prevention Caucus New York, co-chaired by Germany and Switzerland, and its members Albania, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Gabon, Guatemala, Japan, Mauritius, Mexico, the Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Uruguay.

Already in 2016 in the context of the 10th anniversary of the Human Rights Council, committed member states jointly called to put human rights at the heart of conflict prevention creating the Human Rights/Prevention Caucus. This year, marked by the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, presents a unique opportunity to reaffirm this global commitment, and is thus a key moment for unifying the international community and building trust.

Members of this Caucus, in Geneva and in New York, advocate on both sides of the Atlantic for close **cooperation between different UN actors** and an effective **cooperation between the three pillars** to strengthen the UN's conflict-prevention capacities. In this context, we recall the **Secretary General's Call to Action for Human Rights** that reaffirmed the importance of embedding human rights in all pillars of the work of the UN in 2020.

Despite progress made, we still have a long way to go for human rights to become an integral part of conflict prevention and sustainable peace. Prevention is not a passive endeavor. Member States, the UN and its agencies must continue along the path of more systematic joint and integrated action. Prevention must be proactive, strategic, and deliberate. It requires diplomacy, negotiation, and international cooperation. By prioritizing the protection of human rights, we can intervene before conflicts become insurmountable. Preventing conflicts means preventing the suffering of innocent people,

preserving communities, and ensuring peace and stability in our interconnected world through less costly and invasive measures.

Therefore, we continue to give priority to strengthening the UN's prevention capabilities and advocate for greater use of indicators of human rights violations for the early warning of conflicts. We also believe that instead of focusing only on prevention during times of emergency, long term investments in strong and resilient civil societies, sustainable development and social cohesion are needed. Addressing the root causes of conflict requires addressing inequalities. This can foster unity and trust within societies, reducing the likelihood of social unrest and violence. As the High Commissioner for Human Rights stressed during the Open Debate in the Security Council in May: **Trust is the foundation of conflict prevention and of sustainable peace.**

In this respect, we welcome that the Secretary General's Policy Brief on **A New Agenda for Peace** underscores that human rights in their entirety - economic, social, and cultural rights as well as civil and political rights - are integral to peace. It encourages Member States to include human rights in national prevention strategies. The New Agenda for Peace provides a good starting point for these discussions, but Member States need to come together, discuss these ideas further and decide together how to adapt them towards a strong outcome of the Summit of the Future.

It is indisputable that systematic human rights violations are an early indicator of conflict on the one hand, and that respect for human rights can prevent conflict and contribute to sustainable peace on the other. We strongly encourage the organs of the United Nations to make full use of their existing mandates and the tools already at their disposal. For example, through the **exchange of information between the Security Council, the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission**. As a cross-regional group of Member States, the Caucus stands ready to work with all member states, civil society, human rights defenders, and the entire UN system to address cross-cutting issues on peace and security from a prevention and human rights perspective with effectiveness and accountability.

To conclude, we would like to ask the following question: The linkage between inequality and conflict is increasingly recognized. Could you provide us with tangible examples on how addressing economic and social inequalities can contribute to conflict prevention and sustainable peace – and, therefore, how the recommendations from the New Agenda for Peace could be operationalized realistically?

I thank you.