



World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (#WEAAD2024)

Combating violence, abuse and neglect of older persons during conflict situations

Friday, 14 June 2024, 10:45 – 12:00 pm (ET)
Virtual Event

United Nations Headquarters, New York

Concept Note

Registration link: <https://bit.ly/WEAAD2024NY>.

About WEAAD

The World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) is observed on 15 June. It was officially recognized by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 66/127 in 2011, following a request by the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA), who first established the commemoration in 2006. WEAAD represents the one day in the year when the world voices its opposition to elder abuse, a human rights violation, and enhances the recognition of the dignity of older persons and their right to live free of fear and violence.

Background

Conflicts and violence are currently escalating globally. By 2050, it is estimated that 1 in every 6 people will be aged 65 or over, increasing the vulnerability experienced by older persons to violence. The Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons has noted¹ a surge in elder abuse, exacerbated by a confluence of crises, including the recent pandemic, climate change, and armed conflicts. Particularly, conflicts exacerbate existing human rights concerns for older persons, aggravating violence, abuse, and neglect during these volatile situations.

Many older persons living in conflict zones face heightened risks of violence, abuse, and neglect compared to other community members. Due to additional vulnerabilities such as reduced mobility, health challenges, and disability, older persons may be unable to flee violence, unlike many younger people in similar situations. Moreover, older persons often experience ageism and discrimination, leading to their needs being overlooked during humanitarian or crises response

¹ Violence against and abuse and neglect of older persons: Report of the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, [A/HRC/54/26](https://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/hrc/interim-reports/interim-report-no-1).



services. Such situations further impede access by older persons to nutrition, healthcare, and other essential needs necessary for their survival.

According to a report² by Human Rights Watch, in many ongoing conflicts waged between non-state actors such as political insurgents, international terrorist groups, and other illicit groups, older persons are increasingly targeted for violent acts, including unlawful killings, executions, rape, and destruction of their livelihoods. They often cannot access remedial services to seek legal counsel or redress. Protective laws for older persons are scarce in conflict situations, enabling perpetrators of violence to act with impunity.

As conflict and violence persist, elder abuse will continue to escalate, targeting the most vulnerable, including older women, Indigenous Peoples, refugees, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), and migrants. Meaningful engagement and participation of older persons in conflict resolution and peacebuilding initiatives are crucial to achieving the targets in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 and promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development.

Objectives:

- Raise awareness and foster action to combat violence, abuse, and neglect against older persons in conflict settings.
- Promote innovative approaches to meet the diverse needs of older persons, enhancing their access to essential healthcare services, including mental health support, nutrition, and other basic necessities, within humanitarian response frameworks.
- Facilitate discussions around the development of inclusive policies and strategies aimed at preventing and addressing elder abuse within conflict contexts.
- Explore avenues for engaging stakeholders, including older persons themselves, in conflict resolution efforts and ensuring their meaningful participation in initiatives for civilian protection, humanitarian response, conflict prevention, resolution, reconciliation, reconstruction, and peacebuilding.

² Human Rights Watch, 2022, No One is Spared: Abuses Against Older People in Armed Conflict, [No One is Spared: Abuses Against Older People in Armed Conflict | HRW](#).



- Advocate for enhanced data collection and needs assessment methodologies tailored to effectively address the multifaceted needs of older persons in conflict situations.