

BACKGROUND GUIDE

UNHRC



MUNIMUN

2026

Letter from the Secretariat.....	3
Committee overview.....	4
Key Terms and Definitions.....	4
The Protection of Stateless Persons in the Context of Climate Change in Asia Pacific.....	7
Background.....	7
Defining the issue.....	7
International framework.....	8
Key points of tension.....	10
The protection of Human Rights Defenders from Enforced Disappearance in the Context of Transnational Repression.....	12
Background.....	12
Defining the issue.....	12
International framework.....	13
Key points of tension.....	14
Research and Preparation questions.....	16



Letter from the Secretariat

Dear Delegates,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the 2026 edition of the Masaryk University Model United Nations Conference. As Secretary General, it is an immense privilege to witness the incredible passion and dedication each of you will bring to this conference.

As our motto suggests, our aim for this year is to help delegates lead, think, and be inspired. In accordance with this goal, we have curated a diverse selection of committees and topics that ensure heated debate and the need for compromise. We hope that each delegate can take advantage of the unique space that MUNs bring, one where ideas are tested, diplomacy is practiced, and perspectives are broadened.

On behalf of the entire MUNIMUN team, I wish you the best of luck in your preparations and sincerely hope you have fun at the end of the day.

Do not forget that we are here to help ensure that your experience at MUNIMUN is the best that it can be. Should you have any questions, comments, concerns, or any other statements, please do not hesitate to contact me, your chairs, or the general MUNIMUN email.

I look forward to seeing the energy you bring to this conference and the lasting memories you will create.

Best wishes,

Kerem Efe Özen

Secretary General

Committee overview

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) is an intergovernmental body of the United Nations system, established in 2006 by the UN General Assembly. It is based in Geneva and serves as the primary UN forum responsible for promoting and protecting human rights worldwide. The Council is composed of 47 member states elected by the General Assembly, reflecting equitable geographical representation.

The main mandate of the UNHRC is to address situations of human rights violations, including gross and systematic abuses, and to promote the effective implementation of international human rights standards. It conducts its work through regular sessions, special sessions, and a range of mechanisms such as the Universal Periodic Review, which evaluates the human rights records of all UN member states. The Council also appoints independent experts and special rapporteurs to monitor, report on, and advise on specific thematic issues or country situations.

The committee deals with a broad range of issues, including civil and political rights, economic, social, and cultural rights, minority protections, gender equality, freedom of expression, and the rights of vulnerable populations. By encouraging accountability, strengthening international norms, and supporting inclusive institutions, the UNHRC contributes to global efforts toward peace, justice, equality, and sustainable development.

Key Terms and Definitions

Topic A

Asia Pacific - Geographic region spanning East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, Oceania, and Pacific Islands, home to over 4.7 billion people, per UNESCAP classifications.

Climate change - Long-term alteration of temperature and weather patterns, primarily human-induced, as defined by UNFCCC and IPCC.

Loss and Damage - Adverse climate impacts beyond adaptation limits, including economic costs and non-economic harms like cultural loss (UNFCCC Warsaw Mechanism).

Just Transition - Framework for equitable shift to low-carbon economies, safeguarding

workers' rights and vulnerable groups (ILO Guidelines).

Stateless person - Individuals not recognized as a national by any state under its law (1954 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons).

Asylum seeker - Person seeking international protection from persecution or harm, pending refugee status determination (1951 Refugee Convention).

Refugee - Persons fleeing persecution based on race, religion, nationality, group, or opinion, outside their country (1951 Refugee Convention).

Displacees - UNHRC terminology for Individuals forced to relocate due to

disasters, conflicts, or development, often lacking legal status.

Birth recognition and right to nationality

- Legal documentation of birth granting citizenship, universal entitlement without discrimination (UDHR Art. 15; CRC Art. 7; SDG 16.9).

Racial discrimination - Any distinction based on race, color, descent, or ethnic origin impairs rights (UDHR Art. 2, 7; ICERD).

Right to life - Inherent entitlement to life and security, protected from threats including environmental hazards (UDHR Art. 3; ICCPR Art. 6).

Effective remedy - Access to competent tribunals for enforcement of rights violations (UDHR Art. 8; ICCPR Art. 2).

Topic B

Human Rights Defender (HRD) - An individual, group, or organization that works to promote, protect, or realize universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms. HRDs are defined by their actions rather than by profession or legal status and may include journalists, lawyers, activists, educators, community leaders, or ordinary citizens advocating for justice and equality.

Transnational Repression (TNR) - A set of practices through which states extend coercive power beyond their borders to silence, intimidate, or harm individuals living abroad. TNR targets exiled HRDs, journalists, political opponents, and diaspora communities through digital, legal, or physical means.

Digital Surveillance - The monitoring of individuals' online activities, communications, or devices using spyware,

hacking tools, or other technologies. In TNR contexts, digital surveillance is used to track, intimidate, or gather information on HRDs abroad.

Cyber Harassment / Online Harassment

- The use of digital platforms to threaten, intimidate, or discredit HRDs. This includes doxxing, smear campaigns, hacking attempts, and coordinated online attacks.

Reprisals - Acts of intimidation, harassment, or violence against individuals for cooperating with the United Nations or other international human rights mechanisms. Reprisals can occur both domestically and across borders.

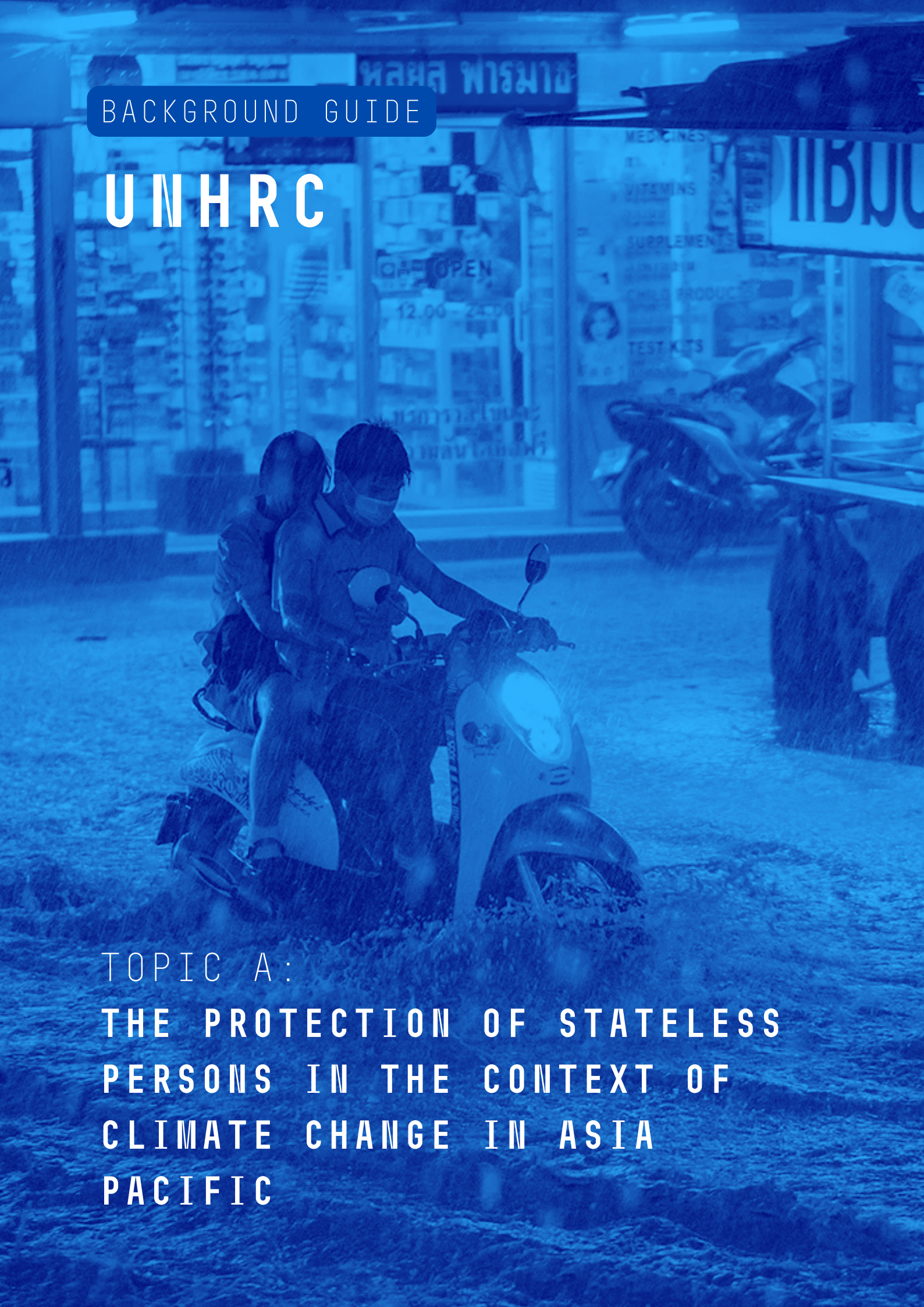
Extraterritorial Human Rights Obligations

- The responsibilities of states to respect and protect human rights even when their actions occur outside their own territory. These obligations are central to addressing TNR.

Rendition - The extrajudicial transfer of an individual from one country to another, often involving kidnapping or coercion. Renditions are used in severe cases of TNR to detain or punish HRDs abroad.

Extradition Abuse - The misuse of formal extradition procedures to target HRDs with politically motivated charges. This includes issuing fraudulent arrest warrants or manipulating INTERPOL systems.

SLAPPs - Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation

A blue-tinted photograph of a man and a child riding a motorcycle through a puddle in front of a pharmacy. The man is wearing a face mask and the child is sitting behind him. The pharmacy in the background has signs in Thai and English, including 'MEDICINES', 'VITAMINS', 'SUPPLEMENTS', 'CHILD PRODUCTS', and 'TEST KITS'.

BACKGROUND GUIDE

UNHRC

TOPIC A:
THE PROTECTION OF STATELESS
PERSONS IN THE CONTEXT OF
CLIMATE CHANGE IN ASIA
PACIFIC

The Protection of Stateless Persons in the Context of Climate Change in Asia Pacific

Background

Defining the issue

The Asia-Pacific region is home to over 4.7 billion people, more than 60% of the global population, driving over half of worldwide GDP growth in recent years, yet it grapples with profound challenges related to statelessness. According to the 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, administered by the UN Refugees, defines a stateless person as one "who is not considered as a national by any State under the operation of its law," Asia recorded over 1.5 million such individuals, including known communities like the Rohingya, Bajau Laut, Hill Tamils, Biharis, Lhotshampa, Banaban, Indigenous Papuans, and highland minorities. UN Refugees (2025) estimated 10-15 million people globally are affected by this status, and at least 4.4 million stateless people worldwide are denied basic rights such as education, employment, and healthcare.

While Central Asian countries such as Kyrgyzstan and have historically become the firsts to end statelessness, the violation of the human rights of stateless persons documented by Special Rapporteurs and OHCHR include: Special Rapporteur Tom Andrews reported systematic attacks, arbitrary arrests, and sexual violence of Rohingya in Myanmar amounting to crimes against humanity (OHCHR, 2021); Bajau Laut in Malaysia endure forced evictions and denial of education per Universal Periodic Review (UPR) submissions; Hill Tamils in Sri Lanka face statelessness-induced exclusion from land rights amid floods, noted in OHCHR statements; and Lhotshampa in Bhutan experienced refoulement risks during environmental displacements, as per Special Rapporteur findings.

As the world is currently on the path towards 2.8°C (UNEP, 2025), loss and damage impacts of climate change in the Asia-Pacific have intensified with extreme weather events occurring up to three times more often in vulnerable areas, leading to annual economic losses projected at 6% of GDP with current trends (UNESCAP, 2025). Non-economic loss and damages include displacement of over 150 million anticipated globally by 2050, disproportionately in low-elevation coastal zones, and cultural losses from submerging small island states. In Bangladesh, Cyclone Amphan in 2020 displaced over 2.4 million, straining food security and rights to adequate living standards, while Pacific Island nations like Kiribati face existential threats from rising seas, prompting UNHRC Resolution 53/6 calls for loss and damage equity.

The interplay between climate change and statelessness in Asia-Pacific reveals severe human rights implications worldwide. Other than experiencing the violation of basic human rights, stateless persons now face amplified risks from climate change like uninhabitable living conditions and livelihood without nationality and/or relocation rights, exacerbating denial of asylum and arbitrary detention, and cultural dissolution. Rohingya communities in Myanmar-Bangladesh border zones face compounded perils from recurrent floods, while

Vietnamese-Cambodians in Tonlé Sap endure ethnic discrimination without nationality protections. Based on the IPCC report (2021), at a warming peak of 2°C, as the global mean sea-level rise is projected to rise from 2-6 meters, populations of the Pacific islands are at an imminent risk of losing their land and identity.

Globally, human rights of vulnerable populations such as stateless persons in the context of climate change challenges sovereignty and international law. The human rights violation against stateless persons highlights the need for enhanced multilateral cooperation to address vulnerabilities exacerbated by environmental pressures. Thus, in the Model United Nations this year, we must affirm obligations and raise the ambition of states to respect, protect, fulfill human rights in alignment with previous agreements to protect and promote human rights in the context of climate change.

International framework

In 2015, an unprecedented UN landmark case was brought by Ioane Teitiota¹, also known as the “world’s first climate refugee” from Kiribati—the Pacific island nation that is facing sea level rising threats, against the State of New Zealand for denying his request to seek asylum. Although Ioane and his family’s case was denied, they have set forth new standards that could facilitate successful climate-related asylum claims in the future ([OHCHR, 2020](#)).

Although there has not been any resolution specifically connects human rights, stateless persons, climate change; these are the key past resolutions that have built up the discussion ground for human rights of stateless persons in the context of climate change:

- **1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons**²
- **1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness**³
- **1976 Convention on Eliminating Discrimination Against Women and Children (CEDAW)**⁴
- **Resolution 20/4 on The right to a nationality: women and children (2012):** Calls for eliminating gender discrimination in nationality laws to prevent statelessness among children born to foreign or stateless mothers.⁵

¹ OHCHR (2020). Views adopted by the Committee under article 5 (4) of the Optional Protocol, concerning communication No. 2728/2016. <https://juris.ohchr.org/casedetails/2798/en-US>

² UNGA. (1954). *Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons*, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 360, p. 117. <https://www.refworld.org/legal/agreements/unga/1954/32744>

³ UNGA. (1961). *Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness*, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 989, p. 175. <https://www.refworld.org/legal/agreements/unga/1961/20424>

⁴ UNGA (1979). *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women>

⁵ UNHRC. (2012). *The right to a nationality: women and children* (A/HRC/RES/20/4). <https://docs.un.org/A/HRC/RES/32/5>

- **Resolution 32/5 on Human rights and arbitrary deprivation of nationality (2016):** Urges states to prevent arbitrary deprivation of nationality and avoid statelessness, particularly for children and women.⁶
- **Resolution 35/20 (2017):** The Council noted the urgency of protecting human rights of migrants and persons displaced across borders due to climate change's adverse effects, requested a panel and report on protection gaps held at the 50th Council session. The Council incorporated an annual programme of work to discuss different themes related to climate change and human rights since 2023.⁷
- **[Resolution 47/24 \(2021\)](#):** The Council recognized disproportionate climate impacts on rights of people in vulnerable situations, requesting a report and ongoing panels.⁸
- **[Resolution 48/14 \(2021\)](#):** Establishment of the mandate of a Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change, in alignment with previous agreements such as the Paris Agreement under the UNFCCC.⁹
- **[Resolution 53/6 \(2023\)](#):** Recognition of the importance for all countries of averting, minimizing and addressing loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change, followed by an annual panel on ensuring livelihood resilience in the same context.¹⁰
- **[Report 53/34 \(2023\)](#):** Affirm human rights obligations amid climate change and migration, calling for non-discrimination and remedies.¹¹
- **[Resolution 56/8 \(2024\)](#):** States to develop and effectively implement policies that facilitate just transitions.¹²
- **[Resolution 59/25 \(2025\)](#):** States to take effective measures to fulfil at least the new collective quantified goal on climate finance, while making additional efforts to assist developing countries in their adaptation and mitigation initiatives, including in the pursuit of fair, equitable, inclusive and sustainable just transition pathways from a high-carbon economy to a low-carbon economy.¹³

⁶ UNHRC. (2016). Human rights and arbitrary deprivation of nationality (A/HRC/RES/32/5). <https://docs.un.org/A/HRC/RES/20/4>

⁷ UNHRC (2017). Human rights and climate change (A/HRC/RES/35/20). <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/RES/35/20>

⁸ UNHRC. (2021). Human rights and climate change (A/HRC/RES/47/24). <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/RES/47/24>

⁹ UNHRC (2021). Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change (A/HRC/RES/48/14). <https://docs.un.org/A/HRC/RES/48/14>

¹⁰ UNHRC (2023). Resolution on Human rights and climate change (A/HRC/RES/53/6). <https://docs.un.org/A/HRC/RES/53/6>

¹¹ UNHRC (2023). Providing legal options to protect the human rights of persons displaced across international borders due to climate change (A/HRC/53/34). Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change, Ian Fry. <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/53/34>

¹² UNHRC (2024). Resolution on Human rights and climate change (A/HRC/RES/56/8). <https://docs.un.org/A/HRC/RES/56/8>

¹³ UNHRC (2025). Resolution on Human rights and climate change (A/HRC/RES/59/25). <https://docs.un.org/A/HRC/RES/59/25>

Key points of tension

Legal Reforms: Advocate reforms to align national laws with the 1954 Statelessness Convention, ensuring climate-displaced persons access documentation and residency, as gaps exacerbate vulnerabilities for stateless populations in OHCHR reports.

Protection of Stateless Populations: Prioritize tailored safeguards, such as UNHCR-partnered evacuation protocols for stateless persons, integrating statelessness into regional and national climate frameworks to prevent isolation during disasters.

Racial Discrimination: Embed anti-discrimination clauses (UDHR Art. 2, 7) targeting evictions and exclusion of stateless persons, drawing from UPR submissions calling for bias-free aid distribution in flood-prone zones.

Right to Life: Strengthen early warning and relocation systems (UDHR Art. 3) for Indigenous Papuans and Banabans facing sea-level rise, linking climate adaptation to life-saving measures highlighted by Special Rapporteurs.

Effective Remedy: Establish accessible tribunals and loss-and-damage funds (UDHR Art. 8) for non-nationals, ensuring judicial recourse for climate-induced harms.

Addressing Birth Recognition and Right to Nationality: Promote universal birth registration in disaster areas (SDG 16.9, UDHR Art. 15), countering intergenerational statelessness for children of displaced communities like Rohingya, via mobile units and digital systems.

Loss and Damage: Develop equitable compensation mechanisms under the Warsaw International Mechanism, prioritizing stateless access to funds for non-economic losses like cultural erosion in Pacific islands, as per UNESCAP and IPCC assessments.

BACKGROUND GUIDE

UNHRC

TOPIC B:
THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN
RIGHTS DEFENDERS FROM
ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE IN
THE CONTEXT OF TRANSNATIONAL
REPRESSION

The Protection of Human Rights Defenders from Enforced Disappearance in the Context of Transnational Repression

Background

Defining the issue

A human rights defender (HRD) is any individual, group, or association that actively works to promote, protect, or realize universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms. The term does not refer to a formal legal status or professional category; rather, human rights defenders are defined by what they do, it describes a broad spectrum of actors whose activities contribute to advancing human dignity, equality, and justice. They may include journalists, lawyers, educators, community leaders, whistleblowers, environmental activists, trade unionists, or ordinary citizens who take action to challenge injustice. Their work may focus on civil and political rights, economic and social rights, minority rights, gender equality, environmental protection, or any other area recognized under international human rights norms.

Despite their essential role, human rights defenders frequently face intimidation, stigmatization, criminalization, and violence, both from state authorities and non-state actors. These risks are often heightened when defenders belong to marginalized groups or challenge powerful political or economic interests. The international community therefore recognizes the protection of human rights defenders as a critical component of maintaining democratic governance, rule of law, and accountability. Repressions of human rights defenders occur even in transnational form.

Transnational repression is a form of repression when states reach beyond their borders to silence, intimidate, or harm individuals living abroad. These individuals are often journalists, human rights defenders, political opponents, members of minority communities, or ordinary people who have exercised their right to speak freely or are simply suspected of or perceived as against a certain regime. Experts are documenting a wide range of such practices including:

- Digital surveillance, cybercrime and online harassment;
- Harassment and threats directed at family members remaining in the country of origin;
- Abuse of legal and administrative systems, including renditions and extraditions, Immigration procedures, SLAPPs, financial measures;
- And in the most serious cases, abductions, arbitrary detention, torture, enforced disappearances, and targeted killings.

Over the past decade, transnational repression has expanded in scope, geography, and sophistication. The tactics used have become increasingly digital, increasingly transnational, and increasingly coordinated. A trend of subtler and less visible forms of repression develops, where it is hard to prove the acts of repression and to hold anyone accountable. Although IHRLC does not explicitly prescribe protection specifically against TNR, existing legal frameworks can be

applied to protect HRDs against those transnational acts. Most acts of TNR are directly connected to at least one of the many human rights protected by the UN human rights treaties and soft law instruments, such as the rights to life, physical integrity, liberty and security, privacy, freedom of movement, freedom of expression, freedom of religion or belief, minority rights, freedom from torture and ill-treatment, and freedom from enforced disappearances.

International framework

The foundation of UN engagement was laid in 1998, when the General Assembly adopted Resolution 53/144, the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. This landmark document affirmed that all individuals and groups have the right to promote and protect human rights, and crucially, the right to communicate with international bodies without fear of retaliation. Throughout the 2000s, the General Assembly adopted a series of follow-up resolutions reaffirming these principles and condemning intimidation, arbitrary detention, and harassment of HRDs. Although these early texts did not yet refer to transnational repression, they implicitly addressed the protection of defenders who had fled abroad or sought asylum.

A major institutional development occurred in 2004, when the UN created the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders. This mandate became central to documenting reprisals, including surveillance of exiled activists, threats to their families, and politically motivated extradition requests—patterns that would later be recognized as core components of transnational repression.

From 2010 onward, both the Human Rights Council (HRC) and the General Assembly expanded their focus. HRC Resolution 13/13 (2010) and Resolution 22/6 (2013) addressed the criminalization of HRDs and highlighted reprisals against individuals engaging with UN mechanisms. In parallel, the General Assembly adopted resolutions such as 68/181 (2013) on women human rights defenders and 70/161 (2015) condemning reprisals and emphasizing the growing role of digital surveillance. During this period, the UN Secretary-General's annual reports on reprisals became a key source of evidence, documenting cases of intimidation, travel bans, and threats against HRDs living abroad.

By the late 2010s, the UN began explicitly addressing the technological and cross-border dimensions of repression. UNGA Resolution 72/247 (2017) recognized online harassment and digital surveillance as threats to HRDs, while Resolution 74/146 (2019) condemned the misuse of counter-terrorism laws, extradition systems, and immigration procedures to target defenders—an early acknowledgment of the mechanisms now associated with transnational repression.

In the 2020s, UN bodies increasingly recognized TNR as a distinct and growing phenomenon. UNGA Resolution 76/163 (2021) highlighted digital repression, spyware, and surveillance technologies, noting patterns of harassment of HRDs abroad. Subsequent HRC resolutions on reprisals in 2022 and 2023 included detailed language on cross-border intimidation, threats to families, and misuse of legal systems. The HRC's work on new and emerging technologies further emphasized the need for safeguards against extraterritorial targeting enabled by spyware and digital tools.

Most recently, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has issued guidance papers and thematic analyses addressing transnational repression. These documents identify key patterns—including digital surveillance, misuse of INTERPOL mechanisms, forced returns, and pressure on diaspora communities—and clarify how existing human rights obligations apply extraterritorially. Together, these developments mark a significant shift: the UN now recognizes transnational repression not as a series of isolated incidents, but as a systematic challenge requiring coordinated international action.

Key points of tension

- Legal Reforms: Strengthening enforcement of international human rights law.

How existing international human rights treaties: the ICCPR, CAT, and the Refugee Convention can be better enforced to address cross-border threats.

- Protection of HRDs: Securing the rights of HRDs
- Legal accountability: Holding governments and nonstate actors accountable for acts of transnational repression.
- Promoting International Cooperation Against TNRs.

Research and Preparation questions

Topic A: The Protection of Stateless Persons in the Context of Climate Change in Asia Pacific

1. How can states ensure birth registration for children of stateless persons in disaster-prone areas, aligning with SDG 16.9 and Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) Article 15, to prevent intergenerational statelessness?
2. What mechanisms will combat racial discrimination (UDHR Articles 2 and 7) of stateless persons, exacerbated by climate displacements?
3. How to specify enforcement for the right to life (UDHR Article 3) via early warning systems and relocation protocols?
4. How to guarantee effective remedies (UDHR Article 8), including compensation funds and judicial access, for loss and damage affecting stateless communities?
5. What are the framework protocols for actionable commitments?

Topic B: The protection of Human Rights Defenders from Enforced Disappearance in the Context of Transnational Repression

1. How can the international community help publicly identify the perpetrators, methods and scale of transnational digital repression against HRDs?
2. How can the international community help to establish accessible “escalation channels” that allow exiled HRDs to easily report online violence, deplatforming and other digital threats and ensure that complaints are handled promptly with the involvement of humans who have the relevant contextual knowledge?
3. What measures can be made to acknowledge that exiled HRDs who qualify for refugee status may face specific risks due to the nature of their work and ensure that they can receive appropriate protection and support and access asylum and resettlement procedures in an expedited manner?
4. What incentives can be made to review and revise laws or adopt new laws to allow for the prosecution of the perpetrators and facilitators of transnational repression against HRDs?
5. What measures can be taken for states to refrain from committing, co-opting or condoning acts of transnational repression, online or offline, and ensure that all acts of transnational repression on their territory are investigated and prosecuted promptly, fully and effectively;?
6. How can the international community help to ensure that all HRDs in their jurisdiction, regardless of their legal status, are protected from violence, threats and harassment, as well as refoulement or extradition on criminal charges related to their work?
7. How can the international community help to establish clear legal pathways for human rights defenders to leave their countries and reside abroad with the right to work and return home safely?