



WE WILL ABIDE BY INTERNATIONAL LAW AND ENSURE JUSTICE

“The purposes and principles of the Charter and international law remain timeless, universal and an indispensable foundation for a more peaceful, prosperous and just world. We will abide by the international agreements we have entered into and the commitments we have made. We will continue to promote respect for democracy and human rights and to enhance democratic governance and the rule of law by strengthening transparent and accountable governance and independent judicial institutions.”

United Nations General Assembly, “[UN75 Declaration](#)”, September 2020, A/RES/75/1.

“If the most powerful countries can violate human rights, then what does that say to other states for what they can and cannot do?”

University of Essex Model UN, United Kingdom, ages 16–30, students, mostly men.

UN75 DATA ON THIS COMMITMENT

UN75 dialogues



UN75 survey



Research snapshot



We organize the relevant UN75 data gathered across 2020 according to the [UN75 Declaration's 12 commitments](#). For the full methodology, see the UN75 report “[Shaping Our Future Together](#)”.

FROM THE UN75 DIALOGUES¹

WHERE WE ARE NOW

Participants from across regions and age groups raised concerns about new and intensified risks to democratic governance and multilateralism emerging around the world. They referred to an increasing number of nationalistic and undemocratic leaders threatening human rights, undermining multilateralism and hindering progress towards global peace and security, including by legitimizing existing authoritarian regimes. Participants in Central, Eastern and South-eastern Asia observed that these forms of radicalism and isolationism are a threat to cooperation and peaceful relations among countries, and pose challenges to the promotion of world trade and the creation of a truly open global economy.

“COVID-19 has notoriously impacted compliance with human rights standards and violations of human rights became more frequent.”

Dialogue organized by the UN Office in Baku, Azerbaijan, ages 16-30, mixed professions and genders.

Many participants, particularly from Asia, highlighted the lack of regulation and oversight over the digital transformation that was threatening democratic governance, and worsening human rights abuses and inequalities. **They referred to the way technological developments risk enabling systemic dis- and miss-information, increasing governments’ surveillance powers, and reinforcing existing inequalities and vulnerabilities.**

Corruption and inequitable fiscal policies are viewed widely as an obstacle to development. Participants in Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Northern Africa and Western Asia cited government corruption as one of the most common causes of concern about the ability of the international community to achieve sustainable development and be better off by 2045. Inequality of wealth and assets has increased as a result of illicit financial flows and inequitable fiscal policies, leading to systemic underinvestment in health, education and social protection systems, and sowing distrust in governments and institutions.

“Inequitable tax regimes and illicit financial flows from corruption and tax evasion are virulent drivers of political grievances, while constraining the resources that are available to support equal opportunity and better outcomes for the poor.”

Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies, USA, mixed ages and professions, mostly women.

Widespread gaps in the enjoyment of human rights have been exacerbated by COVID-19. Many respondents in Northern Africa, Western Asia, and Central and Southern Asia noted that freedom of speech continues to be stifled in many countries, where journalists bear the brunt of repressive laws and harassment campaigns. Participants noted that COVID-19 has exacerbated threats to human rights, offering many governments an excuse to restrict civil and political liberties in the name

1. This report contains a summary of the analysis of 1,141 UN75 dialogue summaries received from 94 countries between 2 January and 7 November 2020. The dialogue summaries were analyzed in partnership with the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies. For the full methodology, see the UN75 report [“Shaping Our Future Together”](#).

of extensive public health responses and surveillance. The health crisis itself has had a negative impact on the attainment of other basic rights, including the rights to food, health, education, and work.

WHERE WE WANT TO BE

Leveraging digital technology in support of the rule of law and democracy. Some participants want to see a future where digital technology is leveraged by governments to protect human rights and to strengthen the rule of law, for example by using digital tools to support the administration of justice in remote areas or to facilitate the submission of complaints about human rights violations.

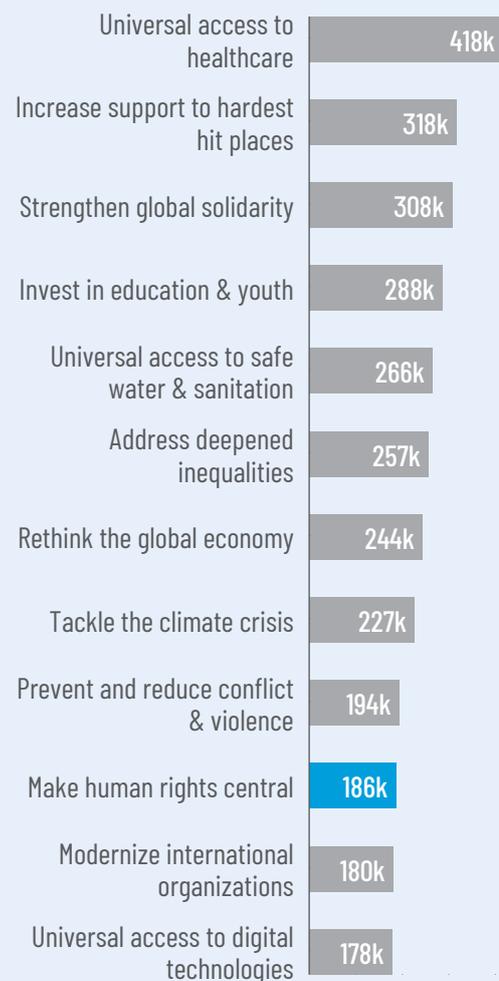
A world of social justice and respect for human rights. Participants from across the world want to live in just societies that are free of discrimination and racism, where human rights are protected, and the UN is given greater powers to address violations and abuses at the national level. Many dialogues held by students envisioned a future of greater social justice and solidarity in 2045, thanks to a mix of individual responsibility, strong civic engagement, electoral participation by young people, fairer policies and increased government accountability.

A world free of corruption, illicit financial flows and tax evasion. Participants from many low- and middle-income countries emphasized the importance of a future where corruption in government has been eradicated, where there is a strong accountability framework for illicit financial flows and international tax evasion. A number of dialogues would like to see a new fiscal compact for progressive economic taxation, and the use of fiscal policy to rebalance decades of under-investments in health, education and social protection systems.

“We must foster a culture of peaceful coexistence, say no to violence racism, xenophobia, and radicalism.”

Dialogue organized by UNAMA, Afghanistan, mixed ages and genders, technicians.

UN75 Survey immediate priorities to recover from the pandemic: Making human rights central to recovery was a top short-term priority for 185,000+ respondents



UN75 Survey Question: What should the international community prioritize to recover better from the pandemic? Base: 1,133,501 (all respondents as from 22 April, when this question was added). Participants could select up to three responses.

HOW WE CAN GET THERE

Democratic governance, rule of law and democracy

Fostering civic engagement and democratic participation. Students across the world called for the Secretary-General and governments to advocate for civic engagement and voting as key democratic pillars through which citizens can drive concrete change.

Strengthen international law and treaties

Updating international law to reflect new challenges. Participants in dialogues across the world, called on governments to review obsolete treaties to make sure they adequately address emerging challenges, including lethal autonomous weapons, artificial intelligence, antimicrobial resistance, space protection, social media dis- and miss-information, biotechnology, data collection/use.

Participants called on UN Member States to increase ambitions under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement, including by strengthening the latter through the provision of more binding obligations.

Participants in many dialogues encouraged governments to consider updating the UN Charter to ensure it better reflects global challenges in the 21st century, with an emphasis on the climate crisis. They asked the Secretary-General to assertively push governments to fulfill their existing international obligations.

Human rights and social justice

Strengthening efforts towards reconciliation and decolonization. Participants called on governments and the Secretary-General to address the power structures that continue to prevent self-determination and complete decolonization. They proposed increasing investment in and promotion of reconciliation work and develop adequate redress mechanisms for affected populations.

Community groups in Bolivia and Papua New Guinea, among others, asked governments and the UN to expand access to basic services in Indigenous communities, while simultaneously respecting traditional practices and ways of life, for example, by prioritising technical assistance to local craftspeople and farmers instead of simply focusing on cash-transfer schemes and handouts.

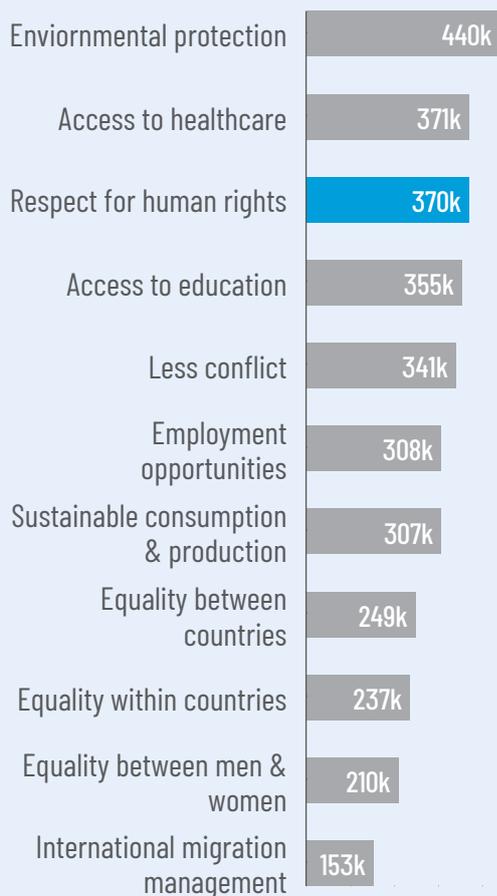
Participants stressed, as a justice priority, the need to uphold the human rights and interests of Indigenous peoples, including the protection and promotion of Indigenous and traditional knowledge.

Reinforcing human rights instruments.

A number of participants suggested governments update and strengthen human rights instruments to better address topics such as systemic racism, corporate accountability for human rights violations, and protection of Indigenous practices and worldviews. Governments could strengthen the powers of the Human Rights Council to ensure compliance.

Ensuring equal rights for women and LGBTQI+ people. Many participants urged national governments to ensure equal rights for women and LGBTQI+ people, by reducing the gender pay gap, addressing domestic violence, and banning all forms of harassment and discrimination.

UN75 Survey long-term priorities: More respect for human rights ranked third among respondents long-term priorities



UN75 Survey Question: Taking a longer view, if you picture the world you want in 25 years, what three things would you most want to see? Base: 1,220,848 (all respondents). Participants could select up to three responses.

Corruption and fiscal policy

Fighting illicit capital flows, corruption and tax evasion. Participants across the world called on the Secretary-General to advocate for stronger international action against corruption, illicit capital flows, and international tax evasion. Participants in several dialogues emphasized the need for governments to ensure global transparency of offshore assets to prevent tax evasion and the acceleration of beneficiary ownership measures. They asked governments to enact strong anti-corruption policies.

Governments should agree on a multilateral response to illicit capital flows and tax evasion and close the legal loopholes that enable them. Participants in Northern America called on national governments to consider policies to combat tax evasion or unfair tax liabilities, such as:

- Temporary or specific-purpose wealth taxes, such as solidarity taxes for post-COVID-19 recovery.
- Fair corporate taxation that avoids profit shifting and tax avoidance, including through publishing/reducing tax exemptions, and exploring withholding taxes on turnover, as well as denying state assistance to companies using tax havens.
- Surtaxes on sectors making excessive profit, including digital taxes.
- New norms on budgeting processes to study evidence-based impact on inequality, including through greater inclusion of marginalized groups in participatory budget setting processes.

RESEARCH SNAPSHOT²

Academic publications

- Boon K. E. 2016 "[United Nations as Good Samaritan: Immunity and Responsibility](#)" Chicago Journal of International Law.
- Cambou D. 2019 "[The UNDRIP and the legal significance of the right of indigenous peoples to self-determination: a human rights approach with a multidimensional perspective](#)" The International Journal of Human Rights.
- Carraro, V. 2019 "[Promoting Compliance with Human Rights: The Performance of the United Nations' Universal Periodic Review and Treaty Bodies](#)" International Studies Quarterly.
- Dai, R. 2019. "[2020评估](#)": [联合国人权条约机构体系的未来走向](#)" Chinese Review of International Law.
- Deplano R. 2020 "[The parliament of the world? Reflections on the proposal to establish a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly](#)" Leiden Journal of International Law.
- Droubi S. 2017 "[The Role of the United Nations in the Formation of Customary International Law](#)" International Community Law Review.
- Egan, S. 2020 "[Transforming the UN Human Rights Treaty System: A Realistic Appraisal](#)" Human Rights Quarterly.
- Fassbender B. 2018 "[What's in a Name: The International Rule of Law and the United Nations Charter](#)" The Chinese Journal of International Law.
- Fernández Arribas, G. 2020 "[Rethinking International Institutionalisation through Treaty Organs](#)" International Organisations Law Review.
- Fraser, J. 2019 "[Challenging State-centricity and legalism: promoting the role of social institutions in the domestic implementation of international human rights law](#)" International Journal of Human Rights.
- Freedman R. and Nicholas Lemay-Hébert 2019 "[The Security Council in practice: Haiti, cholera, and the elected members of the United Nations Security Council](#)" Leiden Journal of International Law.
- Freedman, R. & Houghton, R. 2017 "[Two Steps Forward, One Step Back: Politicisation of the Human Rights Council](#)" Human Rights Law Review.
- Hunt, C. 2019 "[Analyzing the Co-Evolution of the Responsibility to Protect and the Protection of Civilians in UN Peace Operations](#)" International Peacekeeping.
- Jayakody N. 2018 "[Refining United Nations Security Council Targeted Sanctions 'Proportionality' as a Way Forward for Human Rights Protection](#)" Security and Human Rights.
- Lattimer, M. & Sands, P. (eds) 2018 [The Grey Zone: Civilian Protection Between Human Rights and the Laws of War](#).
- Luck, E. 2019 "[Could a United Nations Code of Conduct Help Curb Atrocities? A Response to Bolarinwa Adediran](#)" Ethics & International Affairs.

2. This research snapshot includes a selection of top cited publications identified in the broader UN75 research mapping of academic and policy research focused on multilateralism, the United Nations, and the UN's areas of work, covering the six official UN languages. The research mapping was conducted in collaboration with the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies. For the full methodology, see the UN75 report "[Shaping Our Future Together](#)".

- Meron, T. 2018 "[Closing the Accountability Gap: Concrete Steps Toward Ending Impunity for Atrocity Crimes](#)" American Journal of International Law.
- Pijnenburg, A. 2020 "[Containment Instead of Refoulement: Shifting State Responsibility in the Age of Cooperative Migration Control?](#)" Human Rights Law Review.
- Roberts, A. 2017 [Is International Law International?](#).
- Schrijver, N. 2020 "[A new Convention on the human right to development: Putting the cart before the horse?](#)" Netherlands Quarterly of Human Rights.
- Trahan J. 2020 [Existing Legal Limits to Security Council Veto Power in the Face of Atrocity Crimes](#), Cambridge University Press.

Policy research & reports

- Commonwealth Secretariat & Universal Rights Group 2018 [The global human rights implementation agenda: the role of national parliaments](#).
- Ebo, A. & Hänggi, H. (eds) 2020 [The United Nations and Security Sector Reform](#).
- García-Sayán, D. 2020 [Report of the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers](#), United Nations.
- International Development Law Organization 2020 [Policy Brief: Rule of Law and COVID-19](#).
- Kofi Annan Commission on Elections and Democracy in the Digital Age 2020 [Protecting Electoral Integrity in the Digital Age](#).
- Security Council Report 2019 [The Rule of Law: Retreat from Accountability](#).

- United Nations Development Programme 2016 [A Transparent and Accountable Judiciary to Deliver Justice for All](#).

Commentaries & opinion pieces

- Adams, S. 2020 "[Rohingya Symposium: The UN Security Council, the Rohingya Genocide and the Future of International Justice](#)" OpinioJuris.
- Achume E. T. 2020 "[Black Lives Matter and the UN Human Rights System: Reflections on the Human Rights Council Urgent Debate](#)" EJILTalk!
- Hererra M. C. 2020 "[Is the UN Violating International Labor Standards](#)" EJILTalk!
- Trahan, J. 2020 "[UNSC Veto Power Symposium: New Perspective for Tackling a Core Challenge to the UN System on the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations](#)" OpinioJuris.
- Wintour, P. 2020 "[What is the future of the UN in the age of impunity?](#)" The Guardian.