



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

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Agenda item 3

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

## **Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council on 7 July 2026**

### **62/18. Promoting, protecting and respecting women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights in humanitarian situations**

*The Human Rights Council,*

*Guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations,*

*Reaffirming* the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as well as the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, and recalling all relevant international human rights law and international humanitarian law instruments,

*Acknowledging* that international human rights law and international humanitarian law are complementary and mutually reinforcing, and recognizing the obligation of States to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of all persons and to respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law and that persons living in humanitarian situations are entitled to respect for and the protection of all human rights, in accordance with international law,

*Recalling* General Assembly resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991, Human Rights Council resolutions 31/6 of 23 March 2016, 35/16 of 22 June 2017, 37/20 of 23 March 2018, 39/10 of 27 September 2018 and 45/29 of 7 October 2020 and all other relevant resolutions,

*Recalling also* General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 27 September 2015, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, and the Sustainable Development Goals enshrined therein, including the commitment of all States to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls and to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels,

*Recalling further* General Assembly resolution 69/283 of 3 June 2015, entitled “Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030”, and taking note of the Gender Action Plan to Support the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030,



*Taking note* of the report by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights entitled “Comprehensive approach to promoting, protecting and respecting women’s and girls’ full enjoyment of human rights in humanitarian situations”,<sup>1</sup>

*Reaffirming* that States have the primary responsibility to respect, protect and fulfil human rights, as well as the primary role in the initiation, organization, coordination and implementation of humanitarian assistance within their territory,

*Reaffirming also* that humanitarian assistance must be provided in accordance with the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, and stressing the importance of ensuring that such assistance reaches all affected persons, including women and girls, on the basis of need and without discrimination,

*Expressing its concern* that humanitarian needs have continued to increase in scale, duration and complexity, that women and girls face heightened risks in humanitarian situations and that, according to the Global Humanitarian Overview 2026 of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, in 2026, nearly 239 million people will need humanitarian assistance and protection,

*Recognizing* that humanitarian situations, including, inter alia, humanitarian emergencies, forced displacement, armed conflict, occupation and disasters, including sudden-onset events and slow-onset processes, exacerbate pre-existing human rights challenges and may give rise to or exacerbate risks of human rights violations and abuses, including by generating or reinforcing patterns and structures of discrimination and inequality, and noting that such situations may adversely affect access to healthcare information and services, energy, employment opportunities, housing, water, sanitation and hygiene, and education for women and girls, disrupting protection and care and support systems and having a disproportionately negative effect on the enjoyment of human rights by women and girls,

*Recognizing also and appreciating* the efforts of host countries, most of which are low- and middle-income countries, and their communities in welcoming and hosting refugees and persons who have been forcibly displaced, including as a result of occupation, recognizing their efforts in responding to disasters and other humanitarian emergencies, and stressing the importance of sustained international support, particularly for host countries and host communities,

*Recognizing* that environmental challenges and climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, desertification, land degradation and natural disasters, including sudden-onset events and slow-onset processes, disproportionately impact developing countries, especially those that are most vulnerable to climate change, threaten their development efforts and are among the drivers of growing humanitarian situations and that women and girls, particularly in rural and remote areas, are disproportionately affected by these events, and recognizing also that women and girls, particularly peasant women, women living in rural areas and Indigenous women, who remain underrepresented in environmental decision-making, possess critical knowledge and adaptive capacities that strengthen resilience and community-based adaptation, mitigation and response to adverse climate change impacts,

*Stressing* that addressing the root causes of humanitarian situations is important in supporting the prevention of violations and abuses of the human rights of women and girls and that the full enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls in humanitarian situations is essential not only to addressing immediate humanitarian needs, but also to enabling effective and timely recovery, resilience and inclusive and sustainable development,

*Expressing its deep concern* that women and girls in humanitarian situations face heightened risks of all forms of violence and discrimination, including multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, stereotypes, stigma and inequality and are disproportionately affected by sexual and gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence, rape, trafficking in persons, sexual exploitation, sexual slavery, reproductive violence such as forced or denial of contraception, forced pregnancy, forced abortion and forced sterilization, including when undertaken with the intent to destroy a group, as well as

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<sup>1</sup> A/HRC/49/37.

forced labour, abduction and harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation,

*Expressing its deep concern also* that humanitarian situations have differentiated and compounding impacts on women and girls in vulnerable and marginalized situations, in particular girls, including adolescent girls, women and girls with disabilities, women and girls belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, older women, migrant women and girls, Indigenous women and girls, women and girls of African descent and women and girls living under occupation and in disaster evacuation centres, and that women and girls in such situations may systematically be excluded from humanitarian assistance and protection,

*Expressing its concern* that these heightened risks are compounded by loss of livelihoods, interrupted education and restricted access to health services, including sexual and reproductive healthcare services, and exacerbated by the breakdown and targeting of infrastructure and service provision and the weakening of institutions, which affect women and girls disproportionately, as well as by increased care and support responsibilities throughout the humanitarian cycle,

*Expressing its alarm* that women and girls in humanitarian situations face significantly heightened risks of maternal mortality and morbidity, owing to collapsed food and health systems, lack of equitable access to safe drinking water and sanitation, prohibitive costs, insecurity, restrictions on movement and disrupted access to essential health services, including sexual and reproductive healthcare services and information and mental health and psychosocial support services, with an estimated 61 per cent of all maternal deaths occurring in countries affected by armed conflict or fragility,<sup>2</sup>

*Expressing its deep concern* that women and girls are often disproportionately affected by denial of humanitarian access, hunger, food insecurity and poverty, in part as a result of gender inequality and discrimination, and expressing its alarm that, in humanitarian situations, this structural inequality is intensified, as the loss of livelihoods, displacement, collapsed food systems, and gender stereotypes and negative social norms generate severe acute malnutrition, including among pregnant, post-partum and breastfeeding women, including adolescent girls, increase the risks of recruitment and use of children by parties to armed conflict and force women and girls into negative coping strategies, including child labour and child, early and forced marriage, in order to secure access to food, shelter and other livelihood services,

*Recognizing* that humanitarian situations exacerbate menstrual poverty and existing challenges to menstrual health and hygiene management, including through inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene facilities, which prevent women and girls from managing menstruation safely, privately and with dignity, and the need to integrate menstrual health and hygiene management into humanitarian preparedness and response plans and longer-term investments, including through access to menstrual hygiene products and safe sanitation facilities,

*Expressing its alarm* that girls in humanitarian situations are more likely than boys to be out of school and that girls affected by armed conflict and displacement are nearly 90 per cent more likely to be out of secondary school than their counterparts in non-humanitarian situations, with lasting consequences for their economic security, autonomy and full and equal enjoyment of human rights, and stressing the need to ensure the continuity of and return to inclusive and equitable quality education, including in situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergency, displacement and recovery,

*Recognizing* that women and girls in developing countries, including in least developed countries and small island developing States, are disproportionately affected by the economic and non-economic loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change and their impact on human rights, including loss of livelihoods, land, cultural heritage and traditional knowledge, knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and local knowledge

<sup>2</sup> World Health Organization, “Maternal mortality”, 7 April 2025.

systems, and stressing the need for gender-responsive approaches to averting, minimizing and addressing loss and damage,

*Emphasizing* that gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls is an essential prerequisite for sustainable development and a pathway to the realization of all human rights and that women's full, equal and meaningful participation, leadership and decision-making and girls' meaningful participation, especially of those most affected by humanitarian situations, are essential in efforts to prevent, reduce the risk of, prepare for, respond to and recover from humanitarian emergencies, and noting the importance of a comprehensive approach to promoting, protecting and respecting women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights in humanitarian situations,

*Recognizing* the critical role of women- and girl-led and women's rights organizations, women and young women human rights defenders and women and young women peacebuilders in humanitarian response and recovery, expressing its concern that existing structural barriers to financing and decision-making spaces, attacks on women human rights defenders and peacebuilders and the shrinking of civic space in humanitarian situations undermine effective, inclusive and accountable humanitarian response efforts, and stressing the need to ensure safe and enabling environments for their work, as well as direct, flexible and multi-year funding for such organizations,

*Expressing its concern* that the humanitarian system continues to underinvest in gender equality and in the prevention of, response to and mitigation of the risk of gender-based violence and fails to address the rights and specific needs and capacities of women and girls, that this underinvestment is compounded by the division between humanitarian, human rights and development settings, by significant shortfalls in global humanitarian funding and by context-specific constraints and conditions imposed that impede the allocation and delivery of resources and that these factors maintain and exacerbate pre-existing gender inequality and women's economic insecurity, and expressing its conviction in this regard that greater political will and commitment, international cooperation and technical assistance at all levels are urgently required to promote and protect the human rights of women and girls in humanitarian situations,

*Noting with concern* that all women and girls often face structural barriers to access to justice that are compounded in humanitarian situations, including in the context of armed conflict and occupation, climate change and disasters, by the disruption or collapse of legal and protection systems, stigma, displacement, insecurity, restrictions on movement, precarious legal status and discriminatory social norms, and stressing the need for a holistic, victim- and survivor-centred and human rights-based approach to accountability that ensures access to justice for women and girls in such contexts, including those affected by sexual and gender-based violence, through preventive measures, accessible, safe and confidential complaint mechanisms, measures to prevent revictimization, affordable or free timely legal aid services that are age- and gender-sensitive and disability-inclusive and timely and effective remedies and reparations to victims and survivors and their families, as appropriate,

*Noting* the ongoing efforts and structural reforms within the United Nations system aimed at strengthening the impact, coherence, efficiency and accountability of humanitarian action, emphasizing that such processes should ensure the adequate prioritization of the protection of all women and girls in crisis contexts, and noting that efforts to streamline and simplify, while important and necessary, must not be at the expense of the humanitarian system's capacity to identify, mitigate and respond to the specific needs, including the protection needs, of women and girls through dedicated, specialized assistance and by ensuring that there is no weakening of resources and institutional mandates that enable agencies to effectively respond to those needs,

1. *Calls upon* all States to respect international law, including international humanitarian law and human rights law, and in particular to fulfil their obligations to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of all women and girls, including in humanitarian situations, and to ensure that these obligations are reflected in national laws, policies, strategies and plans related to conflict prevention and response, humanitarian response and climate change and disaster risk management, including women and peace and security national action plans, where appropriate and as applicable, that are age- and gender-

responsive and disability-inclusive, multi-hazard and human rights-centred and that respond to the lived realities of affected women and girls, promoting their safe, meaningful participation;

2. *Affirms* that ensuring the meaningful participation of affected women and girls from the early stages of humanitarian emergencies, including in the planning and delivery of international humanitarian assistance and post-conflict reconstruction programming, is essential to effective and inclusive humanitarian action and sustainable development, and calls upon all relevant actors to ensure the protection of women, including young women, human rights defenders and women- and girl-led organizations operating in humanitarian settings;

3. *Calls upon* all relevant actors to invest in the conduct of comprehensive risk assessments prior to the onset of humanitarian emergencies to identify potential risks, persons in vulnerable situations and existing national capacities, and encourages the systematic, impartial and timely collection, analysis and dissemination of sex-, age- and disability-disaggregated data and gender analysis on the human rights situation and humanitarian needs of women and girls in humanitarian situations to address the persistent evidence gaps that undermine effective, human rights-based humanitarian programming and to ensure that data-collection systems are interoperable and designed and implemented in a manner that guarantees confidentiality, safety, data protection and the informed consent of those providing information, while avoiding increased risks of stigmatization, reprisals, revictimization or exposure of victims and survivors and their families;

4. *Calls upon* States, United Nations agencies and humanitarian actors, as appropriate, to recognize and address the differentiated human rights impacts of climate change and environmental pollution and degradation on women and girls and to adopt human rights-based, age- and gender-responsive and disability-inclusive approaches from the outset of prevention, recovery and resilience strategies, where relevant, guaranteeing that such approaches are developed with respect for the views and the meaningful participation of affected women and girls and their communities and build on women's roles as first responders and local knowledge holders;

5. *Also calls upon* States, United Nations agencies and humanitarian actors, in collaboration, where appropriate, with the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, to ensure uninterrupted and non-discriminatory access for women and girls in all humanitarian situations to healthcare services, including sexual and reproductive healthcare services and maternal health services, the timely distribution of dignity kits tailored to context-specific needs and the continuity of inclusive and equitable quality education and nutrition and to ensure that the physical design and delivery of humanitarian assistance across all displacement settings, including camps, informal settlements and host community contexts, incorporates adequate lighting, safe, adequate and equitable sanitation facilities and secure access routes, as minimum safety measures to prevent and mitigate gender-based violence;

6. *Calls upon* all States, United Nations agencies, within their respective mandates, and humanitarian actors, where appropriate, to integrate gender-based violence risk mitigation across all sectoral programming, including in relation to water, sanitation and hygiene, shelter, land and site coordination, health, food security, education and livelihoods, by developing disaster contingency plans that ensure continuity of gender-based violence risk reduction measures, establishing dedicated gender-based violence coordination mechanisms prior to the onset of emergencies and setting minimum preparedness standards to ensure that gender-based violence response capacity is in place before a crisis occurs;

7. *Stresses* the need for all relevant actors to pay due attention to the prevention of and response to sexual and gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence, reproductive violence, trafficking in persons and sexual exploitation, as well as harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage, and to ensure integrated, accessible, safe and confidential reporting, referral and service delivery mechanisms that are age- and gender-sensitive and disability-inclusive, with guarantees of non-revictimization and victim- and survivor-centred approaches, and recognizes that effectively addressing the structural causes of gender-based violence also requires community-based prevention

strategies that empower women and girls and engage men, boys and community leaders in challenging the discriminatory norms that perpetuate such violence, including by promoting positive, non-violent models of masculinity and gender-equal relationships;

8. *Calls upon* all States, United Nations agencies and humanitarian actors to adopt, enforce and resource zero-tolerance policies on sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment for all those who work or are involved in humanitarian settings, including through mandatory prior training on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and on the specific protection needs of women and girls, the establishment of accessible, safe and confidential complaint mechanisms for reporting sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment and the provision of timely, victim- and survivor-centred assistance, and accountability measures for perpetrators;

9. *Calls upon* States, United Nations agencies and humanitarian actors, as appropriate, to provide comprehensive, adequate, sustainable and accessible support services for women and girls who are victims of human rights violations and abuses in humanitarian situations, including health services, including sexual and reproductive healthcare, mental health and sustained psychosocial support services, legal assistance and economic empowerment, through well-funded shelters, specialized organizations and coordinated multi-service referral pathways, ensuring that all services and programmes are trauma-informed, victim- and survivor-centred, age-, gender- and disability-sensitive and respectful of privacy and dignity, invites States and other relevant stakeholders to consider implementing accessible and timely remedies and recovery programmes, where applicable, recognizes the significant resource demands that such programmes place on States, particularly developing countries responding to humanitarian situations, and stresses the importance of sustained international support for host countries at their request;

10. *Calls upon* all States, in accordance with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, to adopt a holistic approach to accountability for all forms of violence against all women and girls, including sexual and gender-based violence, in humanitarian situations that moves beyond punitive criminal justice frameworks to encompass preventive measures, access to justice and effective remedies, including through accessible complaint mechanisms, the removal of structural and financial barriers to legal aid and guarantees of non-revictimization;

11. *Calls upon* all United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, States and relevant humanitarian actors to take into consideration the promotion and protection of the rights of women and girls in humanitarian situations throughout the ongoing efforts within the United Nations and humanitarian system, including in relation to the programmatic capacity of gender-based violence prevention, mitigation and response;

12. *Affirms* that effective international cooperation, including North-South, South-South, triangular and bilateral frameworks, is essential to provide developing countries with the appropriate means, including financial means, facilities and technologies, necessary to achieve sustainable development and to adequately respond to humanitarian situations and that official development assistance and humanitarian aid should be gender-responsive, and calls upon all relevant stakeholders to enhance efforts to secure finance that addresses the specific needs of women and girls for countries and local communities that are affected by compound risks caused by humanitarian emergencies and vulnerability to natural hazards and the adverse effects of climate change to prevent, mitigate and adapt and respond to disaster impacts and humanitarian needs, with a view to reducing the disproportionate vulnerabilities and risks faced by women and girls and building their resilience;

13. *Calls upon* States, relevant United Nations agencies, within their respective mandates, and international cooperation actors to adopt integrated and coherent programming approaches that foster women's economic empowerment and equal access to property, land, economic resources and formal employment and promote social protection policies, care and support systems and labour market inclusion in post-conflict and post-crisis situations and to treat recovery and reconstruction as a critical opportunity to advance gender equality and to dismantle structural barriers to gender equality rather than to reproduce them;

14. *Encourages* States, United Nations agencies, international financial institutions and other donors, as appropriate, to consider increasing the direct, flexible and

multi-year funding allocated to gender-based violence mitigation, prevention and response and to gender-responsive programming, including, where appropriate, by directing a meaningful share to women- and girl-led and women's and girls' rights organizations and operationalizing the localization agenda, to enable national and local organizations to lead humanitarian response efforts and to invest in sustained national and community-based capacity to prevent and respond to gender-based violence, ensuring that emergency programming strengthens rather than substitutes for national protection and care and support systems beyond the acute phase of response, and encourages States to address the current global humanitarian funding gap by supporting the promotion, protection and respect of the full enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls in humanitarian situations;

15. *Requests* the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to submit to the Human Rights Council, at its seventy-first session, an analytical report on the impact of the funding gaps and of the humanitarian-development divide on the enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls in humanitarian situations and recommendations for bridging the gap and fulfilling the rights of women and girls in a manner consistent with international human rights law, with input from all relevant stakeholders, including States Members of the United Nations, United Nations bodies, agencies, funds and programmes, the treaty bodies, the special procedures of the Council, national human rights institutions, civil society organizations and women and girls in humanitarian situations.

*33rd meeting  
7 July 2026*

[Adopted without a vote.]

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