

#Agency&Dignity



UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

July - August 2024



Population Aged 65 Years or Over World Wide (2022)

10% globally

Europe & Northern America: 18.7
Australia/New Zealand: 16.6
Eastern & South Eastern Asia: 12.7
Latin America & the Caribbean: 9.1
Central & Southern Asia: 6.4
Northern Africa & Western Asia: 5.5
Oceania: 3.9
Sub-Saharan Africa: 3.0

Source: United Nations Department of Economic and
Social Affairs (UN DESA) World Population Prospects
2022.

FEATURED

The Latest: **14th session of open-ended working group** on ageing from 20th May to 24th May

Expert Meeting on the Human Rights Obligations of States Regarding Violence Against Abuse, and Neglect of Older Persons in all Settings

**UN Principles for
Older Persons**
Independence
Participation
Care
Self-fulfilment
Dignity

14th Session Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing



The Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWGA) was established in 2010 by the United Nations General Assembly by resolution [A/RES/65/182](#) to identify possible gaps in the protection of the human rights of older persons and how best to address them; It collaborates with UN Member States, National Human Rights Organizations (NHRIs), NGOs, and other bodies. UNDESA and OHCHR function as its secretariat.

UN High Commissioner Urges Enhanced Global Dedication to Protecting the Rights of Older Persons

The Working Group has an important job: safeguarding the rights of older persons, who play a big role in our communities. As their numbers are expected to double by 2050, it's crucial to tackle issues like abuse, neglect, unfair treatment, and difficulty accessing healthcare. We also need to close the gap in technology use and improve safety nets for them. Creating a solid global law to protect the dignity and rights of older people is urgent. The UN Summit is a chance to make commitments that respect and support older people, giving them the chance to live well and fulfill their potential.

[Read more](#)

The fourteenth session of the OEWGA held in New York between 20th and 24th May 2024, marked a crucial milestone in their efforts, achieving a notable success as member states agreed on the existence of normative gaps in the legal framework. The working group recommended the Member States to consider the best possible options to address these gaps, including a legally binding instrument to address the shortcomings in protecting the rights of older persons.

[Read more](#)

In its 14 years of existence, the Working group has discussed several thematic issues, such as:

- Non-Discrimination in Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- The Right to Social Security
- The Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of Older Persons
- Recognizing and Responding to Abuse of Older Persons in a Global Context
- Health and Human Rights



Violence Against, Abuse, and Neglect of Older Persons in All Settings

The Rights of Older Persons Section of the OHCHR, held an expert meeting on human rights obligations of States regarding violence against, abuse and neglect of older persons in all settings on 13th and 14th June. During the two-day event, experts discussed challenges and gaps in meeting legal obligations and developing effective policies and strategies by sharing their experiences in the field.

The discussions highlighted the pervasive issues of stigma, marginalization, discrimination, and stereotyping that negatively impact the quality of life for older individuals. Additionally, the connections between intersectionality, vulnerability, risk, and responsibility were explored.

The consensus was clear: there is a need for a comprehensive, legally binding instrument to ensure the rights of older persons are respected. The experts emphasized the need to respond to long-term and emerging challenges older persons face. Recommendations included enhancing political participation for older persons, further research, a greater emphasis on data collection and availability to influence policy, closing the digital gap and combating resulting fraud, and addressing structural violence.

[Find out more on our website](#)

VOICE OF EXPERIENCE

66

Every life has equal value. Our rights do not diminish with age.

Michelle Bachelet, Former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

I think the biggest challenge older people are facing is being invisible. They are not recognised. No one sees them.

Idah Mukuka Nambeya, Senior Advisor, Grandmother to Grandmother Campaign

Ageism and age discrimination are underlying to most situations of deprivation of liberty for older persons

Claudia Mahler, UN Independent Expert

Independent Expert Report A/HRC/54/26: on Violence, Abuse and Neglect of Older Persons

The Independent Expert expressed worry over the rapid aging of the world population due to the vast violence against, abuse, and neglect of older persons happening around the globe. Lack of definition and clarity of what elder abuse is and how to unify a definition is a large part of the problem. In general, there are five formally recognized forms of abuse: physical, psychological and emotional, sexual, financial or material, and neglect. Ageism, which is defined by the Independent Expert as "stereotypes, prejudice and/or discriminatory actions or practices against older persons that are based on their chronological age or on a perception that the person is "old"," is a large factor contributing to violence and abuse against older persons.

There is a general lack of International Human Rights standards protecting older persons, what protections they do have come largely from the UDHR, UNCAT, CEDAW, and CRPD. This intersectional overlap between older persons guarantees the rights and protections of those who fall into these sub-categories. The United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing is a direct action to address abuse of older persons through the use of global collaboration. Retributive actions on abuse are important, but the Independent Expert also stressed the need for prevention clauses in place on both a regional, and international level; Advocating for full support to create legislation and precautions of this kind is the next step for the United Nations, and member states everywhere.



Climate Advocate



Dr. Margaretha Wewerinke-Singh

Associate Professor of Sustainability Law, University of Amsterdam and Adjunct Professor of Law, University of Fiji

“The KlimaSeniorinnen judgement marks a watershed moment in climate litigation. For the first time, the European Court of Human Rights has found a State in violation of its human rights obligations due to inadequate climate action. This groundbreaking ruling illustrates how human rights can be invoked to promote climate justice, building on the leadership and vision of older women.

The case also demonstrates the power of collective action in advancing environmental protection. By affirming the applicant association’s standing, the Court acknowledges the unique risks faced by older persons and validates their role in protecting future generations.

This decision sets a crucial precedent, potentially opening doors for similar cases across Europe and around the world. It underscores the role of human rights in holding governments accountable and highlights how older persons can lead in operationalising intergenerational equity in climate action.”

Let's Celebrate: A Human Rights Win

The European Court of Human Rights ruled in April that the Swiss State had violated the human rights of over 2,000 Swiss women who brought forth a motion that the governments lack of climate action put their lives at risk. This win shocked much of Europe, as the same court rejected two, similar cases on procedural grounds not long before this decision was made. The women in this case, who call themselves KlimaSeniorinnen, claimed that a combination of their age (64 and older), and gender make them a greater target to climate change related vulnerability. The Swiss government has failed to meet its own standards for cutting greenhouse gas and carbon emissions; For this reason the courts found merit and sided with the women of this suit, successfully setting a legal precedent that will impact many people both young and old across the European continent.

[Read more](#)



Upcoming Events of Interest:

[Helpage International Asia Pacific Regional Conference on Ageing](#)

[Human Rights Council 57th Regular Session from 9th September 2024 to 9th October 2024](#)

Did You Know?

How do older people view themselves as rights holders and in their community? **Age & Opportunity** found out: [Read More Here](#)

The **UNB 60+ Program** at the University of Brasilia in Brazil allows individuals aged 60 and above to enrol in regular university courses as special students. This initiative aims to promote lifelong learning and social inclusion by providing older adults with the opportunity to pursue academic interests, stay intellectually active, and engage with the university community.

Myth, Misconception, or Fact?

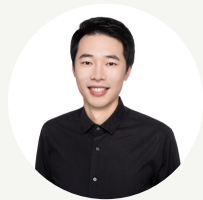
Myth 1: There are adequate laws and protections for older people at all levels of government

Reality: Only a few countries have legislation that specifically addresses all forms of violence against, abuse, and neglect of older persons; Legislation related to older persons in many countries is not designed with a human rights lens. According to a 2024 survey conducted by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI), 71 percent of the 60 NHRIs respondents reported inadequate legal protection of the rights of older persons in their countries, and almost 50 percent reported a lack of specific legal protection available to older persons issues.

Myth 2: There is no ageism or discrimination in laws against older persons that do exist

Reality: Gaps in the current human rights framework persist, allowing ageism and age discrimination to continue.

Team Introduction



Kejian, JPO, is supporting the work of the Rights of Older Persons Section, OHCHR. He is committed to raising awareness of the issue and promoting solidarity and collective action among all stakeholders.

Email: kejian.chen@un.org



Luíza is an intern from Brazil, holding a degree in International Relations and pursuing a master's in International Public Policy. Passionate about meaningful work and driven to have a positive impact, Luíza is currently focused on pension-related research and exploring governmental partnerships.



Shengjun is an intern from China with a bachelor's degree in Social Welfare from Renmin University of China. She is currently enrolled in a dual-degree master's program between Tsinghua University and the University of Geneva, focusing on public policies for sustainable development. Shengjun is dedicated to working on the care and support of older persons.



Elise is an intern from the United States, with a bachelor's degree in Political Science and International Relations. She is continuing her education at the University of Minnesota completing her master's degree in human rights with a concentration in social psychology. Elise is working on the visibility of older persons.



Dr. Chitralekha Massey, Chief of Section for the Rights of Older Persons at OHCHR.

Email: chitralekha.massey@un.org



HUMAN RIGHTS FOR ALL

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