

ID:	Is anonymous?	Is organisation?
313	No	Yes
Is form complete:	Organisation name:	
Yes	Universal Rights Group	
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Global catastrophic risks mitigated	Risk multipliers managed	Implementation timeframe
Unknown risks	Conflict or political violence	Short

Recommendations for the strengthening, systematising and emboldening of Human Rights up Front

HRuF is not set in stone; and there is valuable space for strengthening, systematizing, and emboldening it.

DETAILS

Recent reports on Myanmar demonstrate that, although the UN system correctly identified the risk of mass atrocity crimes, its analysis was not translated into an effective rights-based strategy to prevent or mitigate the gross and systematic human rights violations that were to follow.

Central to this failure were structural and systemic obstacles that HRuF, if properly implemented, could have overcome. This demonstrates the continued relevance and value of HRuF, which if diluted and neglected will remain a missed opportunity and a broken promise to the victims in Sri Lanka and Myanmar.

If the UN is serious in its conviction that Rwanda, Sri Lanka and – now – Myanmar, must ‘never happen again’ then the initiative must be revived, and its principles, objectives and key approaches supported by UN leadership and integrated into the reformed UN system, especially in the context of prevention.

Implementation Strategy

The Secretary General MUST:

- Reaffirm the United Nations’ commitment to the UN Charter through the support for Human Rights up Front, including by creating a comprehensive plan for its implementation, in the field and at headquarters.
- Prevent HRuF from becoming a box-ticking exercise; actively and meaningfully integrate these tools into the UN’s work, and support efforts to link risk analysis with decision-making and implementation.
- Assign a senior official within the UN (ideally at an Under Secretary-General or Assistant Secretary-General level) the responsibility for communicating the objectives of HRuF, internally and externally.
- Restore the original HRuF initiative’s objectives of building support at the multilateral level for preventive action (and HRuF) and raising human rights concerns with member States at early stages of prevention.
- Restore the original HRuF initiative’s objective of laying the groundwork for prevention at the ground level, improving constructive engagement with national authorities on tackling sensitive issues.
- Produce an internal strategy document about establishing a balance between access and advocacy, and public and private diplomacy, based on real-world examples and in consultation with staff with considerable field experience, including former and current Resident Coordinators.
- Review the report by the Prevention Experts established by Human Rights Council Resolution 38/18 on the prevention

potential of the Human Rights Council and consider its relevance to HRuF.

Obstacles

The biggest obstacles come through not doing enough outreach for the above. Therefore, it is suggested that the following can be done:

Outreach

- Develop a plan for ongoing outreach and engagement on HRuF with UN actors, member States, and civil society; consider using avenues of engagement created during consultations on the UN reforms.
- Dedicate a webpage to the HRuF initiative, including quotes from UN leadership; it could also be linked to the Secretary-General's webpage on prevention, and 'United to Reform' webpages.

Accountability

- Train UN staff on HRuF, including through training that involves real-world scenarios and on engagement with host authorities on sensitive issues, as well as training on risk assessment and subsequent action.
- Develop standards for professional evaluation and include incentives for principled action, and disincentives for contradicting human rights obligations, that include demotion or termination.

MEMBER STATES

- Urge the Secretary-General to reaffirm the UN's commitment to Human Rights up Front and to advocate for greater inclusion of human rights priorities in the UN's prevention efforts.
 - Consider extending public support, verbal, symbolic or financial, for the Human Rights up Front project in the EOSG.
- Cross regional input can best come from cross-regional engagement.

CIVIL SOCIETY

- Match increased transparency about HRuF programming with more strategic advocacy, with both member States and UN agencies.

For more information: https://www.universal-rights.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/URG_NYC_HRuF_report_final_web_page.pdf

WIDER IMPLICATIONS

Reducing inclusivity and accountability in national and global governance

No.

Accountability

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Conversing effect in increasing poverty and inequality

No.

Reducing conflict and political violence

Violent conflict exacts an incalculably high price in direct and indirect damage to societies, economies and people. As noted in the World Bank–UNDP report ‘Pathways for Peace,’ war kills and injures combatants and civilians alike, and inflicts insidious damage to bodies, minds and communities that can halt human and economic development for many years to come.

Violent conflict also has a major impact on the long-term ability of societies to improve the well-being of populations and to reduce poverty, disease and other catastrophic risks. Its long-term effects on the countries involved, and on their neighbours, include monetary costs such as reduced economic growth, minimised trade and investment opportunities, and the added costs of reconstruction.

Therefore, adopting these recommendations are beneficial in reducing poverty and inequalities that are naturally caused by violent conflicts.

THEORY OF CHANGE

Implementation strategy

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Political will exists to realise this proposal

There is a general commitment by all member states to human rights. However as aforementioned there are not enough accountability and transparency mechanisms in place to turn this commitment into effective action.

What if political will does not exist yet

Through lobbying civil society and member states to promote HRuF's recommendations to be implemented at the UN.

MITIGATING RISKS

Mitigating unknown risks

One of the recommendations details the need to restore the original HRuF initiative's objectives of building support at

the multilateral level for preventive action (and HRuF) and raising human rights concerns with member States at early stages of prevention.

If this recommendation is met and more states vocally support HRuF this will add the needed political capital to human rights priorities. Ultimately meaning that when human rights are at risk the international community will be better positioned to condemn and stop any atrocities from unfolding.