

WORKING PAPER

THE SLIPPERY SLOPE OF AUTHORITARIANISM - USING HUMAN RIGHTS TO ANTICIPATE AND PREVENT CONFLICT

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INTRODUCTION

Early warning and conflict prevention are central to the United Nations' (UN) approach to sustaining peace and protecting global security. The rationale is straightforward: it is far more effective – and less costly in human and financial terms – to prevent a conflict than to respond after violence has erupted.¹ Over the past twenty years, the UN has made significant strides in strengthening its capacity to detect and address potential conflicts before they escalate. Key steps include the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission (2005) to support post-conflict recovery and prevent relapse into violence, the expansion of early warning mechanisms through the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA), and the integration of horizon-scanning and data analytics tools to assess risk in fragile states. One of the most important advances was the 2006 creation of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC), which was explicitly mandated to prevent the human rights violations associated with violent conflict.²

Despite these important developments, the UN system has struggled to respond quickly and effectively to emerging conflict risks. This is in part due to geopolitical constraints and the unwillingness of Member States to agree on collective responses to fragile situations. But it is also the outcome of a UN system that tends to silo information and analysis within separate institutions. As our previous reports demonstrated, one of the most abundant and actionable sources of early warning signals is the UN's human rights system (composed of the Human Rights Council, human rights treaty bodies, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the UN's human rights field presence), which produces an enormous quantity of well-documented and detailed information each year.³ The key recommendation of our 'From Signals to Action – How the UN Human Rights System Can Deliver Early Warning and Conflict Prevention' report was that the broader UN system should draw more heavily on the wide range of early warning signals of violent conflict produced by the UN's human rights system.⁴

These early warning signals can broadly be thought of as a slippery slope, where the loss or gradual erosion of political, civil and legal rights and economic, social and cultural rights (ESCR) increasingly correlates with, and heightens the risk of, violent conflict.⁵ A common pathway involves a concentration of political power and resources in a person or elite group in a way that limits meaningful political and economic inclusion, often leading to coercive state action and an increase in human rights violations. This paper refers to such concentration of political and economic power as “authoritarianism.” While authoritarianism does not necessarily lead to violent conflict - indeed, many highly centralized forms of government are peaceful and stable - the kinds of concentrations of power that rely on limited political space and the security sector for maintaining order may increase the risks of the kind of human rights violations that tend to lead to violent conflict. As authoritarian practices expand across regions, reversing decades of democratic and human rights progress, this paper argues that **rising authoritarianism represents a structural risk multiplier for human rights decline and conflict.**

In practice, the paper explores how concentrations of power and resources interact with human rights indicators to generate not only early warning of violent conflict, but also a unique set of possible policy responses. It highlights what kinds of responses might be most effective in anticipating human rights risks, particularly in highly centralized, authoritarian settings, as well as how this research could inform initiatives and developments such as the follow-up to the Pact for the Future's national prevention strategies,⁶ the 2025 Peacebuilding Architecture Review (PBAR), discussions on the future of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), and the UN80 initiative, among other ongoing UN processes.

Building on our earlier 'From Signals to Action' report, the paper develops an analytical framework linking concentrations of power and resources with human rights risk factors preceding conflict. It identifies a cluster of ten factors that tends to precede violent conflict and explores how these are affected by concentrations of power and resources in settings of growing authoritarianism. The analysis draws on the UN human rights system's outputs, including the Universal Periodic Reviews, Treaty Bodies, Special Procedures, reports of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, HRC-mandated mechanisms, OHCHR

press releases, and four case studies — Nicaragua, Türkiye, Hungary, and Mozambique — supplemented by comparative insights from prior research on Syria, Mali, South Sudan and Myanmar. The findings are presented as a set of lessons and considerations for policymakers and leaders to take early, effective action to prevent a slide into violent conflict. Further, the paper emphasizes the often-overlooked role of economic, social and cultural rights in prevention and adopts a political economy lens to understand how authoritarian systems reproduce structural inequalities.

Research centering the importance of human rights for conflict prevention is particularly important in a context of unprecedented pushback against human rights writ large, rising authoritarianism,⁷ an ongoing reconsideration of the UN's role, practices and capacities, including its prevention role, and anticipated changes in (and potential fallout from) Member States strategies and investments in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. As UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk put it: “funding cuts to my Office, and the broader human rights ecosystem, only offer comfort to dictators and authoritarians. At this testing time, we need governments and societies to stand up for human rights—not step back.”⁸ This project aims to provide evidence for how human rights can avoid a slippery slope from authoritarianism into violent conflict.

UNDERSTANDING AUTHORITARIANISM AND ITS HUMAN RIGHTS DIMENSIONS

DEFINING AUTHORITARIANISM

This working paper defines authoritarianism as a political system in which power and resources have been centralized in a person or elite group in a way that limits meaningful political and economic inclusion and where key state institutions tend to support concentrations of power.⁹ This definition describes authoritarianism in largely political terms as a combination of a lack of political space for elections and the consolidation of power in a small elite.¹⁰ It also aligns with the scholarship suggesting that authoritarianism may display high levels of repression and structural inhibitions on political space.¹¹ And it follows the definition of leading expert Barbara Geddes who describes authoritarian systems as a degree of concentration of power: whether an individual, a military group or a small elite, the greater the concentration of decision-making power, the more authoritarian a regime.¹²

While most scholarship on authoritarianism focuses on political exclusion and lack of political space for vulnerable and/or marginalized populations (e.g. gender exclusion),¹³ the definition adopted for the purpose of this working paper pays particular attention to economic exclusion and the concentration of access to resources in a small elite. This focus on the political economy of authoritarianism draws directly from studies of neopatrimonialism, where rulers co-opt national institutions to gain control over resources.¹⁴

This does not mean that authoritarian regimes lack the institutions commonly associated with civil and political rights, including freedom of expression, assembly and association, among others.¹⁵ Indeed, in many highly centralized political systems, state institutions are well established and highly functioning. However, in such settings of “competitive authoritarianism,” institutions tend to function to exclude other actors and consolidate power in a small group at the centre.¹⁶ In fact, the presence of parliaments, elections, ministries, and courts does not necessarily indicate an open system, but may, on the contrary, point to deeply entrenched, institutionalized forms of authoritarianism.¹⁷

Authoritarian systems have proven extraordinarily resilient, often lasting several decades without serious challenges to their control. Many authoritarian governments overcome significant challenges to their rule, including fractures within elite constellations, social mobilization by disenfranchised groups, sanctions and other external pressure points.¹⁸ The resilience of such systems often means long periods of relative peace – particularly when a single leader stays in power – sometimes followed by rapid, violent transitions.

Like all governments, highly centralized governance systems require domestic leverage, which can be achieved through the tools of repression, propaganda, and instrumentalization of state and/or state-owned institutions (e.g. media, the press). But they also tend to rely on external sources of support, including from foreign actors providing financial assistance and/or advice on co-opting opponents. What are often termed “linkages” between authoritarian regimes in different countries allow two or more political elites to subvert sanctions regimes and bolster respective economies, while sharing lessons on repressive forms of rule.¹⁹ Equally important are forms of “diffusion,” by which one authoritarian regime may influence the trajectory or practices of another government.²⁰

Defining Violent Conflict

A definition of “violent conflict” is needed to examine how authoritarianism may interact with factors to increase the risks of conflict escalation. Drawing on well-accepted UN and expert definitions, we describe violent conflict as follows: **A setting of violent conflict involves the escalation of a dispute into physical force by organized actors resulting in at least 25 battle-related deaths per year.**²¹ We recognize that competing definitions and thresholds exist across a variety of datasets.²² The goal is not to provide an exclusive or exhaustive category of violent conflict but rather a way to describe settings where actors turn to violence to resolve political disputes.

A crucial starting point for this paper is the recognition that **authoritarian governance in itself does not necessarily lead to violent conflict.** Across a wide range of cases, highly centralized forms of government can persist for decades without any outbreak of violence. However, our research indicates that most instances of deeply entrenched authoritarian rule involve some violations of human rights – both political, civil and legal rights and economic, social and cultural rights. As our report ‘From Signals to Action’ showed, the loss or erosion of such rights is often an early warning indicator of more widespread unrest and possible violent conflict.²³ By definition, authoritarian systems also display a strong tendency to concentrate access to resources in the hands of a few, leading to highly unequal societies. As the 2018 United Nations and World Bank ‘Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict’ report found, unequal access to resources and the consolidation of economic power or influence in the hands of a few can make corruption more entrenched, and authoritarian regimes more durable.²⁴ Crucially, the ‘Pathways for Peace’ report found that high levels of inequality across groups is one of the most important factors driving violent conflict.²⁵ So, while authoritarianism itself may not cause conflict, its strong tendency to drive inequality amongst groups and to limit access to resources may be considered a risk factor for violent conflict.

LINKING AUTHORITARIANISM AND HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND ABUSES

A significant body of research demonstrates that increasing concentrations of power and resources in a small elite tends to reduce institutional accountability, restrict political freedoms, and create the conditions that are conducive to human rights abuses and/or violations. For example, two important studies have found that authoritarian governments, especially those lacking institutional checks, are more likely to violate physical integrity rights, such as the protection from torture, extrajudicial killing, and arbitrary detention.²⁶ Freedom House has highlighted the connections between the spread of authoritarian practices and declining levels of freedom within countries, with serious implications for political, civil and legal rights.²⁷

While it is difficult to make a causal claim about authoritarianism and human rights violations and abuses, recent trends appear to support a link between the two. In 2024, Freedom House reported a broad trend of “deterioration in (...) political rights and civil liberties in 60 countries,” particularly with regards to freedom of expression.²⁸ Its 2025 report explicitly noted that **in settings where conditions worsened, the spread of authoritarian practices was a key factor driving the degradation in rights and liberties.**²⁹ Other studies have demonstrated high rates of political repression across a wide range of highly centralized

governance systems, especially those without space and/or reduced access to opposing political parties.³⁰ And where independent media and the judiciary are weak or absent, the likelihood and scale of human rights violations appears to increase significantly.³¹ These findings are broadly supported by the UN's human rights system. In 2024, several UN Special Rapporteurs and Independent Experts pointed out that human rights, particularly the rights to vote and to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association, "were threatened by democratic regression, the rise of authoritarianism worldwide and shrinking civic spaces."³² Other non-governmental actors have been more explicit in linking human rights erosion to authoritarian regime practices.³³

Scholarship has also demonstrated a correlation between authoritarianism and structural violence – forms of harm embedded in social and economic systems rather than direct acts of repression (commonly referred to as physical violence). A wide range of studies link authoritarian rule with long-term patterns of marginalization, discrimination and the denial of basic economic and social rights. These works indicate that authoritarian regimes often perpetuate structural inequalities by suppressing dissent from marginalized groups, obstructing labor and land rights movements, and/or manipulating welfare systems to reward political loyalty.³⁴

The link between authoritarianism and violations or restrictions of economic, social, and cultural rights is less researched and understood. The majority of studies of authoritarianism focus on the inhibition of political rights, especially restrictions on political parties and free speech. This working paper pays particular attention to the ways state control can increase socio-economic inequality, land confiscation, limit religious practices and symbols, and prevent access to key natural resources. It therefore aligns with the scholarship showing that the enjoyment of economic, social, and cultural rights is closely linked to the enjoyment of political, civil and legal rights. Rather than focus exclusively on political space, the present working paper suggests that conflict prevention actors may benefit from a greater understanding of the political economy of authoritarianism.³⁵

Finally, it is worth noting that technological advancements have provided authoritarian governments with a broad range of tools to centralize power and strengthen control over their populations. Surveillance technologies, manipulation of social media platforms and networks, and transnational repression have expanded the ability of authoritarian regimes to monitor, intimidate, and/or neutralize forms of opposition both within and beyond their borders. Sophisticated surveillance infrastructure such as facial recognition cameras, biometric tracking, and AI-powered monitoring systems allows states to track individuals' movements, associations, and behavior in real and across time. Social media platforms are routinely monitored for dissent, while government-run troll farms and bot networks flood online spaces with propaganda, disinformation, and coordinated harassment of activists, journalists and human rights defenders (HRDs), among others. In some cases, regimes use spyware to remotely access dissidents' phones, extracting personal data, communications, and even live audio or video. These tools not only facilitate direct repression — such as preemptive harassment, intimidation or arrests — but also enable indirect forms of control by fostering a climate of fear and self-censorship.³⁶

THE SLIPPERY SLOPE: HUMAN RIGHTS FACTORS PRECEDING CONFLICT

No country or society is fully exempt from the risks of violent conflict. As Rachel Kleinfeld highlights, even relatively stable middle-income countries can descend into violent conflict through a cycle of securitization, political polarization, and an increasing willingness of the elite to tolerate violent, repressive approaches to political disputes.³⁷ This universality of risk is the underlying rationale for Secretary-General Guterres' 2023 call for all member states to produce their own national prevention strategy, grounded in human rights.³⁸ This paper aims to support this call by understanding the interactions between authoritarianism, human rights violations, and violent conflict. We provide evidence and cross-cutting lessons to better apprehend how countries and societies move down the slippery slope of increasing authoritarianism, human rights erosion, and increasing risks of violent conflict.

The following section identifies ten human rights factors that tend to cluster in the lead up to conflict outbreaks.³⁹ While not necessarily a “causal mechanism” or direct pathway to violent conflict, the presence of these factors should be strongly considered as early warning signals by conflict prevention actors. While all connected, these factors can be classified into three groups that illustrate how authoritarian consolidation translates into systemic rights erosion. First, *erosion of inclusion and participation*, comprising: normalization of discriminatory, exclusionary policies and/or discourses, rising hate crimes, use of dehumanizing propaganda (including through hate speech), and targeting of minorities and/or specific population groups. Second, *erosion of accountability and rule of law*, comprising: state-led repression (including through security laws targeting dissent), unequal access to justice/rule of law, and systemic, institutionalized corruption⁴⁰. Third, *erosion of socio-economic equality and civic space*, comprising: unequal or restricted access to resources (including land), restrictions on press, academic and artistic freedom, and rise of nationalist rhetoric and scapegoating.

For each of the human rights factors identified above that tend to be present and come together in the lead up to violent conflict, we explore how each of these are affected by the concentrations of power and resources in settings of both previous and increasing authoritarianism. The following section draws and builds on cases from our ‘From Signals to Action’ report - Syria (2011), Mali (2012), South Sudan (2013) and Myanmar (2017) - and examines how several highly centralized, authoritarian settings either currently or recently under review by the UN’s human rights system highlight similar connections between authoritarianism and increased risks of human rights violations. These include: Nicaragua, Türkiye, Hungary and Mozambique. The rationale for the selection of each case study is outlined in ANNEX 2: Case Study Selection and Background.

Across four conflict case studies examined in our previous research - Syria, Mali, South Sudan and Myanmar - the authors gathered extensive evidence of violations of both political, civil and legal rights and economic, social and cultural rights produced by the UN’s human rights system up to five years preceding conflict outbreak.⁴¹ The authors identified key human rights indicators and categories of early warning signs of conflict escalation or outbreak which directly address the factors identified in this paper.⁴² These categories include indicators commonly associated with deepening social divides (e.g. discriminatory and exclusionary policies); civic space (e.g. hate speech, propaganda, attacks on freedom of expression, restrictions on non-governmental organizations); increases in domestic government violence; violence against women; and violence against children. Notably, according to Freedom House’s reporting, in all countries examined except for one (Mali), the level of freedom at least five years preceding conflict outbreak was described as ‘Not free’ or ‘Partly free’.⁴³ In this way, these cases exhibit correlations between the centralization of power and resources and the outbreak of violent conflict (See ANNEX 1: Table 1.0: Freedom Status Up to Five Years Preceding Conflict Outbreak).

EROSION OF INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION

The first group which illustrates how authoritarian consolidation translates into systemic rights erosion includes factors referring to the erosion of inclusion and participation. These factors highlight how increasing concentrations of political and economic power exacerbate patterns of exclusion, including through the normalization of discriminatory, exclusionary policies and/or discourses; the use of dehumanizing propaganda (including through hate speech); and the targeting of minorities and/or specific population groups (journalists, human rights defenders, asylum-seekers, academics, etc.). These dynamics often lead to an increase in hate crimes, reported by the UN's human rights system across the cases examined. Together, the following section shows how these factors connect to and amplify the loss of equality, tolerance, and civic belonging within highly centralized, authoritarian settings.

Normalization of discriminatory, exclusionary policies and/or discourses

The gradual normalization of discriminatory, exclusionary policies and/or discourses refers to instances of legal discrimination (as included in public policies), censorship, surveillance, among others, which often indicate a pathway to structural discrimination, and in some cases to physical violence. Our previous 'From Signals to Action' report found that mentions of discriminatory or exclusionary policies targeted against ethnic and religious minorities were some of the most frequently occurring terms in the Human Rights Council's reporting preceding conflict outbreak.⁴⁴ In both the lead-up to the outbreak of the Myanmar Government's violence in October 2016 and August 2017 against the Rohingya population in Myanmar, and in the five years leading to the civil war in early 2012 in Mali, discriminatory or exclusionary policies were often combined with descriptions of racial, religious, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation discrimination and incidents of racial hatred, religious, ethnic and inter-communal violence. In Myanmar, policies deemed to be discriminatory or exclusionary appeared over 40 times between 2013 and 2017, the majority of which were directed against women and religious minorities, particularly Rohingya Muslims. Myanmar's 1982 Citizenship Law was widely reported during this period as discriminating against minority groups, including the Rohingya, on grounds of ethnicity or religion and in violation of their citizenship rights.⁴⁵ In Mali, between 2008 and 2012, there were 13 mentions of discriminatory or exclusionary policies, particularly against women and children with regards to succession, marriage and guardianship, among others.⁴⁶

Similarly, the UN's human rights system has adeptly documented the evolution of discriminatory and exclusionary policies and/or discourses in the four settings of growing authoritarianism examined. The information produced by the human rights system on Nicaragua since violently suppressed anti-government protests in April 2018 provide particularly valuable insights on the relationship between the normalization of discriminatory, exclusionary policies and/or discourses and authoritarian practices. Since 2018, the Government of President Daniel Ortega has enacted a succession of discriminatory and exclusionary laws and policies which have facilitated the targeting of several population groups, including real or perceived political dissidents, human rights defenders, women, Indigenous and Afrodescendant peoples, among others. One particular law of concern is the Law of Defence of the Rights of the People to Independence, Sovereignty and Self-Determination for Peace No. 1055, approved in 2020, which provided the Executive with the power to declare political dissidents as 'traitors' and banned them from running for elected office.⁴⁷ Further, in light of Nicaragua's fourth UPR cycle, completed in November 2024, OHCHR reported that the Nicaraguan National Assembly had amended Article 21 of the Constitution and approved Act No. 1145, which allowed it to strip citizenship from those considered as "traitors to the homeland".⁴⁸ The Government has also used existing laws, for instance under supposed counter-terrorism efforts, to target human rights defenders, criminalize political actors, and restrict civil society organizations (CSOs). For example, OHCHR recently expressed concern over the incorrect application of the No. 977 Anti-Money Laundering Law, which it argued was increasingly used to persecute human rights defenders, cancel civil society organizations, and

criminalize various political actors.⁴⁹

Between 2019 and 2024, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has consistently highlighted the normalization of discriminatory and exclusionary policies and/or discourses in Nicaragua. Notably, the language in the UN High Commissioner's reports has become more explicit over time, pointing to the politically motivated nature of discrimination in 2024, and attributing the lack of access to justice, rule of law, and the loss of civic space to the Government.⁵⁰ However, the clearest and most explicit connections between the Nicaraguan government's authoritarian practices and the normalization of discriminatory and exclusionary policies and/or discourses draw from the reporting of the HRC-mandated Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua.⁵¹ In 2023, the Group of Experts highlighted the importance of Act No. 1055 on protecting the right of the people to independence, sovereignty and self-determination for peace, Act No. 977 on money-laundering, and Act No. 1042 on cybercrime, among other policies and laws, as "instrument(s) of persecution."⁵² The Group concluded that the Government's arbitrary efforts to restrict civil society organizations and civic space more broadly were "part of a strategy designed to increase the dependency and vulnerability of citizens to policies of patronage."⁵³ It has gone further in arguing that "crimes against humanity were committed as part of a discriminatory policy, intentionally implemented from the highest levels of the Government of Daniel Ortega and Rosario Murillo against part of the Nicaraguan population for political reasons," constituting a potential crime against humanity of persecution.⁵⁴

Similar strategies of state targeting of minorities and/or specific population groups either through new or existing discriminatory and exclusionary policies and discourses were also observed in Türkiye and Hungary (see also 4. Targeting of minorities and/or specific population groups). In Türkiye, particularly in the aftermath of the 2016 failed coup d'état which seriously challenged the Government's legitimacy, the UN's human rights system has shed light on the targeting of specific population groups through counter-terrorism legislation. The Turkish Government has used counter-terrorism laws, often broadly and vaguely defining terrorism and terrorism-related offences, to target a broad range of individuals suspected of involvement in the failed coup and/or allegedly linked to the Gülenist network.⁵⁵ These have included human rights defenders, political activists, members of the judiciary, journalists, among others. Already in 2017, the UN's human rights system's Special Procedures reported that counter-terrorism and national security provisions in Turkish legislation were being used to restrict freedom of expression "through overly broad and vague language that allows for subjective interpretation without adequate judicial oversight."⁵⁶ More recently, in 2022, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women expressed concern about the impact of the Government's repressive counter-terrorism measures on women's human rights and the rule of law.⁵⁷ OHCHR press releases have further highlighted the government's use of anti-terrorism laws to target and silence voices critical of the government.⁵⁸

In addition to anti-terrorism laws, policies have targeted minorities, particularly Kurds, refugees and asylum-seekers, persons with disabilities, as well as religious minorities, by imposing the state language, "preventing them from speaking in their Kurdish language, and discriminating (against) them in employment opportunities and universities."⁵⁹ In Hungary, the UN's human rights system has shed light on the use of existing legislation for discriminatory and exclusionary purposes against similar population groups. In 2021, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders cautioned against the "use of legislation to overregulate, undermine or obstruct the work of human rights defenders."⁶⁰ Several months later, the Working Group on the UPR provided several recommendations to repeal or abolish discriminatory legislation against organizations, as well as LGBTI+ persons, particularly repeated discriminatory amendments to the Fundamental Law.⁶¹ These have been routinely reiterated by the UN's human rights system, most recently in light of the latest new legislation resulting in "arbitrary and discriminatory restrictions on the rights of LGBTIQ+ individuals to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and privacy," including during events such as Pride parades.⁶² Further discriminatory legislation includes the 'Stop-Soros' laws package, which in 2018 the Human Rights Committee warned would impose "serious restrictions on the operations of civil society organizations and of critics of the State party's immigration policy."⁶³ In Mozambique, the HRC

has highlighted persistent patterns of discrimination against women, girls and children in disadvantaged or vulnerable situations under customary law, particularly with regards to women's access to land and inheritance rights (see 6. Unequal or restricted access to resources (including land)).⁶⁴

Rising hate crimes

While hate crimes remain a generally and instinctively understood term, large variations exist in terms of what constitutes a hate crime, ranging from criminal acts to discrimination, micro-aggressions and hate speech, and thus what can and should be legally prosecuted.⁶⁵ Hate crimes are defined as “criminal acts motivated by bias or prejudice *towards* particular groups of people. Hate crimes comprise two elements: a criminal offence and a bias motivation.”⁶⁶ Actors such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) have played an important role in enhancing the understanding of hate crimes among local authorities, civil society, police and legislators, as well as aggregating hate crime data and information submitted across several states.⁶⁷ However, there remains a general lack of data collection and monitoring of hate crimes, particularly as these pertain to particular population groups which may be priorly excluded from national databases and censuses. This renders targeted policies to address hate crimes and support for victims difficult at best. This also means that rising hate crimes have been difficult to monitor within the UN's human rights system. Nevertheless, some mentions of hate crimes in the HRC's reporting on Türkiye, Mozambique, Nicaragua and Hungary in the past years suggest room for improvement and scope for further monitoring on this issue.

In 2019, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination drew attention to the persistence of racist hate crimes in Hungary, particularly against the Roma population, a concern reiterated several years later in 2021.⁶⁸ The same year, the Working Group on the UPR's report for Hungary offered recommendations to “improve the systems for the prevention, reporting, investigation and prosecution of hate crimes,” specifically those concerning Roma, LGBTQ+ people, asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.⁶⁹ As previously argued, the HRC noted that “long-standing institutional obstacles, the lack of systematic data collection coupled with the Hungarian Government's stigmatising rhetoric about several vulnerable groups (...) has (...) hindered the authorities' effort to effectively tackle hate crimes.”⁷⁰

The UN's human rights system's reporting of rising hate crimes in Mozambique has gone hand in hand with the increasing targeting of women, children, migrants, persons with disabilities, among other vulnerable groups. During Mozambique's 2015 UPR process, the Human Rights Committee raised concern about low reporting of such hate crimes, particularly against women, due to persisting traditional societal attitudes.⁷¹ Similarly in Türkiye, the HRC brought attention to rising hate crimes as early as 2019, particularly physical attacks targeting ethnic minorities such as Kurds, Armenians and Roma, and expressed concern at the low number of hate crimes cases brought before domestic courts.⁷² Türkiye has denied these allegations and highlighted the development of investigative guidelines for hate crimes, most recently during its 2025 UPR process.⁷³ Another serious source of concern for the HRC is hate crimes against women, including so-called “honour” killings and the high number of forced suicides or disguised murders of women in the State party.⁷⁴ Nicaragua's 2024 UPR cycle also drew attention to rising hate crimes, specifically against the Catholic Church and its members, which began in 2018, highlighting a “sharp escalation in their frequency and gravity” between 2022 and 2023.⁷⁵

Use of dehumanizing propaganda (including through hate speech)

The use of dehumanizing propaganda often takes the form of spreading narratives, misinformation, disinformation and/or inflammatory speech in order to target, discredit and/or demean individuals or groups of individuals, most often those belonging to ethnic minorities or other minority and vulnerable groups. The use of propaganda for dehumanization is intimately linked to the use of hate speech,

increasingly employed to dehumanize certain population groups both offline and online, often over sustained periods of time. Our 'From Signals to Action' report argued that "hate speech and its effects on incitement to hatred and violence may be some of the most crucial signals for identifying potential conflict."⁷⁶ In fact, restrictions on freedom of opinion and expression and/or violence against civic space actors or those who express dissenting or unpopular views may silence critical voices and ultimately shrink civic space. A broader closing of civic space may indicate an overall decline in peace and security and an increased risk of conflict. For example, human rights indicators related to civic space, including instances of hate speech and/or propaganda, were frequently referenced in the HRC's reporting on Myanmar between 2013 and 2017.⁷⁷ The pervasiveness of hate speech, both online and offline, and its effects on violence against Rohingya Muslims was particularly well acknowledged by the UN's human rights system in the lead up to the Myanmar Government's violence in October 2016 and August 2017 against the Rohingya community.

Similarly, while the term 'propaganda' seldom appeared in the UN's human rights system's reporting across the four cases examined for this project, all four cases included mentions of hate speech in one or more of the documentation for the Universal Periodic Review, Treaty Bodies, Special Procedures and OHCHR press releases. Most recently, a group of Special Rapporteurs warned that the "weaponisation of misinformation and terrorism-related charges to punish and silence calls for justice and accountability" in Türkiye was a "misuse of the criminal justice system and a clear breach of international law and standards."⁷⁸ Earlier, in 2023, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls highlighted organized campaigns of disinformation, particularly around the term 'gender' by public figures and regressive figures in Turkish society.⁷⁹ Further, Türkiye's latest UPR cycle this year raised concern about increasing cases of hate speech, particularly targeting women in political discourse, LGBTI+ persons, asylum seekers, migrants, ethnic and religious minorities, and "anti-immigrant propaganda," particularly against Syrians.⁸⁰

The UN's human rights system's reporting on Hungary has also highlighted the prevalence of hate speech in recent years, as well as its risks in inciting violence towards certain groups. In 2021, during Hungary's UPR, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination expressed deep alarm for the "prevalence of racist hate speech in Hungary against Roma, migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and other minorities, in particular by public figures who made statements that might promote racial hatred."⁸¹ Several years prior, the Working Group on Hungary's 2016 UPR provided multiple recommendations on taking action and strengthening measures to combat hate speech against ethnic and national minorities (notably Roma, Jews, LGBTQ+, asylum seekers and refugees) in the media, political messages and discourses.⁸² The Special Rapporteur on racism had also called on the Hungarian Government to "take resolute measures to condemn hate speech, including against Roma," which occurred across the political spectrum and became "commonplace in the public sphere".⁸³

However, some of the clearest signs of the authoritarian Government's use of dehumanizing propaganda are found in the Group of Experts on Nicaragua and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights' reports on the deteriorating human rights situation in Nicaragua since the eruption of the 2018 protests. In 2022, the UN High Commissioner drew attention to an online network, allegedly run by the Government and the Sandinista National Liberation Front since April 2018, employing public institutions' staff and resources to systematically post "positive content about the Government and negative commentary about opposition groups," which Meta had removed.⁸⁴ One year later, and again in 2024, the Group of Experts on Nicaragua detailed the use of inflammatory rhetoric by a range of state and state-supported actors, including senior government officials, public institutions representatives, pro-government media and social network users to stigmatize and incite hatred against real or perceived opponents.⁸⁵ The Group of Experts adeptly framed this 'communications strategy' as a "discursive construction of the enemy, ascribing responsibility for the acts of violence to real or perceived opponents of the Government whom they labelled as 'coup plotters' and 'traitors'", which it argued may constitute

incitement to violence.⁸⁶

Targeting of minorities and/or specific population groups

The targeting of minorities and/or specific population groups was a common topic of reporting across all the case studies examined, both in our previous ‘From Signals to Action’ report and the present working paper. Across all of the human rights factors identified for this paper that tend to be present and come together in the lead up to violent conflict, reporting on the targeting of minorities and/or specific population groups was the most systematic and detailed across all of these. Indeed, be it in the Universal Periodic Reviews, Treaty Bodies, Special Procedures, reports of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, or OHCHR press releases, the UN’s human rights system provides detailed instances of deliberate targeting of minorities and/or population groups, most commonly ethnic minorities, human rights defenders, activists, LGBTQ+ people, Indigenous communities, asylum-seekers, women, children, journalists across settings and over sustained periods of time.

The UN human rights system is equally an important source to identify the evolving nature, patterns and frequency of state targeting of minorities and/or specific population groups. In the cases of Nicaragua, Türkiye and, to a lesser extent, Mozambique and Hungary, systematic reporting and detailing of instances of violence against minorities and other population groups highlights the system’s sustained attention on violence trends in these settings. Further, the Human Rights Council has been adept at exposing the connections between increasing concentrations of power and the systematic targeting of individuals and groups perceived as threatening to the state’s power and influence. In fact, it highlights deliberate targeting practices by state actors within growing authoritarian settings as a key practice of exerting control over real or perceived dissenting voices.

For example, the Turkish Government’s deliberate targeting of minorities and specific population groups in Türkiye has been an increasing focus of the UN human rights system’s reporting, particularly since the 2016 failed attempted coup. The HRC has documented the expanding scope of this targeting, initially limited to those individuals directly involved in the failed coup and gradually expanding to representatives of the judiciary (judges, prosecutors), LGBTQ+ persons and organizations, civil society activists and organizations (including women’s organizations), human rights defenders (including women HRDs), journalists, medical doctors, civil servants, academics, Roma people, particularly Roma girls, and Kurdish women.⁸⁷ This has included widespread practices of arbitrary arrests and detention, torture and ill-treatment, intimidation and harassment, stigmatization, smear campaigns, dismissals, asset confiscations and restrictions on movement, among others. The majority of these have been justified under the state of emergency proclaimed following the 2016 failed coup and the restrictive legal regime observed since then (see 5. State-led repression (including through security laws targeting dissent) on Türkiye). Indeed, promptly following the attempted coup, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein clearly stated that “the successive states of emergency declared in Türkiye have been used to severely and arbitrarily curtail the human rights of a very large number of people.”⁸⁸

Further, during Türkiye’s UPR in 2019, OHCHR observed a pattern of persecution of lawyers which constituted an “obstacle to the enjoyment of the right to fair trial and access to justice.”⁸⁹ Special Rapporteurs have been particularly adept at highlighting the patterns and systematic nature of the Government’s targeting practices, for example the Special Rapporteur for the independence of judges and lawyers with regards to attacks and threats against members of the judiciary and lawyers, and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders on the pattern of judicial harassment against human rights defenders.⁹⁰ Türkiye’s UPR in 2025 fronted concerns over the targeting of the same population groups reported on in 2019. Indeed, the Human Rights Committee expressed concern about reports of “persecution, harassment, intimidation and reprisals against human rights defenders, journalists, lawyers, Kurdish

activists, environmental defenders, opposition politicians, academics and any member of civil society perceived as critical of the Government.”⁹¹ The HRC also drew particular attention to increasing violence against women, including the “prevalence of hate speech and harassment targeting women in political discourse,” and the “very high number of femicides and other killings in the context of domestic violence and (...) so-called honour crimes,” as well as the underreporting of violence against children.⁹² Further, the Council signalled an expansion of Türkiye’s targeting reach of Government critics beyond its borders.⁹³ In Nicaragua, the HRC has also reported on the Government’s targeting extending beyond the country’s borders, a phenomenon which it argues has placed many Nicaraguan lives and livelihoods at risk.⁹⁴

Similarly to Türkiye, individuals associated or perceived to have supported the 2018 protests in Nicaragua have equally been targeted by the Government. The UN human rights system has detailed state targeting practices in Nicaragua since 2018 across its mechanisms, including the UPR, reports of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Treaty Bodies, OHCHR press releases, as well as the HRC-mandated Group of Experts on Nicaragua (since 2022). Most notably, the Group of Experts has detailed the varied profiles of individuals targeted by the State, including university students, faculty members and other university staff, Indigenous people and people of African descent, members of the Catholic Church and other Christian denominations, members of the campesino movement, among others.⁹⁵ In 2023, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination expressed deep alarm about instances of violence against Indigenous Peoples and persons of African descent in their territories, which increased significantly from 2018.⁹⁶ This coincided with the HRC’s reporting on rising inequalities in access to land, particularly for Indigenous and Afro-descendent peoples, resulting in multiple acts of violence (see 8. Unequal or restricted access to resources (including land)). Combined, OHCHR has claimed these serious and systematic human rights violations are tantamount to crimes against humanity which “continue to be perpetrated by the Nicaraguan Government.”⁹⁷

Though less frequent, human rights reporting on Mozambique and Hungary has highlighted the increased targeting of similar population groups, including violence around election processes. Most recently following general elections in Mozambique in late 2024, OHCHR press releases have raised alarm over significant post-election violence, particularly the targeting of journalists, lawyers and human rights defenders, including those reporting on the irregularities of the election process, through arbitrary tensions, harassment and intimidation.⁹⁸ Another central issue in the reporting on Mozambique is the stigmatization and violence against women, including older women. Both UPR processes in 2015 and 2021 on Mozambique described increasing violence against women, including “rampant gender-based violence” against women, girls, as well as older women throughout the country.⁹⁹ Also in 2021, in reporting on Hungary’s UPR, the UN’s Special Procedures raised alarm over the increasing targeting of human rights defenders, journalists and women.¹⁰⁰

Overall, reporting on these cases echoes similar reporting examined in our ‘From Signals to Action’ report, which tracked instances of targeting of human rights defenders, journalists, and civil society organizations, as well as a range of instances of violence against women and violence against children over five years preceding conflict outbreak. The rationale was that targeted attacks by state or non-state actors against human rights defenders, including female HRDs, journalists or CSOs, who are often the main transmitters of information about human rights emergencies, may indicate a heightened risk of violent conflict. A key finding was that in some cases, for example in Syria (prior to the outbreak of the war in 2011), reporting on the targeting (including arbitrary arrests and/or detention) of HRDs, journalists and CSOs peaked in 2011.¹⁰¹ In others such as Mali (in the years prior to 2012), South Sudan (prior to the outbreak of the civil war in 2013) and Myanmar (prior to 2017) these categories of human rights indicators were not sufficiently tracked to provide a sense of a broader trend of closing of political and civic space, similarly to the cases of Hungary and Mozambique described above.

EROSION OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND RULE OF LAW

The second group which illustrates how authoritarian consolidation translates into systemic rights erosion includes factors referring to the erosion of accountability and the rule of law. These factors elucidate how state-led repression (including through security laws targeting dissent) and inequalities in access to justice and the rule of law amplify the erosion of accountability and impunity within highly centralized systems. Further, systemic, institutionalized corruption enables political leaders in authoritarian settings to avoid accountability for their actions and undermine a state's capacity to respect and protect human rights, leading to heightened risks of human rights violations. The factors in the following section are connected by the (often gradual) collapse of institutional checks and safeguards within highly centralized, authoritarian settings.

State-led repression (including through security laws targeting dissent)

As Rachel Kleinfeld argues, “authoritarian regimes substitute violence by the state for violence between citizens that looks more chaotic and is therefore more likely to make the news. (...) But state repression has been far bloodier.”¹⁰² In fact, “repression often backfires, so it not only yields more state violence but also increases other bloodshed.”¹⁰³ In the cases of Nicaragua, Mozambique and Türkiye, the UN's human rights system has been explicit in linking (ongoing) repression to state-led/government actions, including through security laws targeting dissent. While state-led repression of anti-government protests in Nicaragua and Türkiye has been prevalent in the HRC's reporting in recent years, similar reporting in Mozambique has highlighted particularly salient repression around elections, most recently electoral violence resulting from the 2024 general elections. This echoes our previous ‘From Signals to Action’ report which identified increases in domestic government violence as a key indicator of violent conflict. The rationale is that an increase in domestic government violence, especially during periods of social unrest, elections, and/or against certain population groups, may signal a significant risk of violence and conflict spillover.¹⁰⁴ Specifically, increases in arbitrary arrests, detention and deportation, particularly as a form of government crackdown on protests, can be a key indicator of future violence or conflict. For example, state-led repression in Syria, as measured by instances of police and/or security force brutality, arbitrary detention and arrests, government crackdowns and human rights abuses committed by the military, rose significantly in 2011 with the onset of social protests and the revolution that followed.¹⁰⁵

In Nicaragua, repression of dissent by the Government and pro-Government elements has persisted well beyond the protests that erupted in 2018. During its latest UPR cycle in 2024, the Human Rights Committee expressed concern over the “excessive use of force in the context of the sociopolitical crisis that had begun in 2018,” including the “alleged violations committed by pro-government armed groups.”¹⁰⁶ Further, the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua argued these violations were committed “as part of a policy spearheaded by high-ranking State authorities looking to maintain power and suppress any form of dissent.”¹⁰⁷ Cases of arbitrary detention, arrests and extrajudicial killings have involved multiple state institutions, including the National Assembly, National Police, Judiciary, Public Prosecutor's Office, Public Defender's Office, National Prison Service and the Institute of Forensic Medicine, where “officials involved received their instructions from high-ranking State authorities.”¹⁰⁸ State repression also has far-reaching consequences beyond a particular conflict and across territories, can be internalized and inhibit the use of newly acquired rights elsewhere.¹⁰⁹ In the case of Nicaragua, the UN's human rights system has regularly brought attention to the state's repressive action against real or perceived opponents both within and beyond its borders.¹¹⁰ The HRC's 59th session update in June 2025 on the situation of human rights in Nicaragua argued that “persecution of those perceived to be in the political opposition to include HRDs, journalists, indigenous peoples, afro descendants, religious leaders not only persists but has become a recurring practice that goes beyond the borders, exposing those in exile to the imperiling

of their life and personal safety.”¹¹¹

The UN’s human rights system has also highlighted state-led repression as a way to consolidate and expand political and economic control, including over land. In Nicaragua, the human rights system has connected instances of state-led repression to the Nicaraguan government’s efforts to consolidate and expand its political and economic control over autonomous regions. As the Group of Experts in Nicaragua argued in its 2024 report, “the State-led repression of Indigenous and Afro-descendant leaders and organizations has been conducted in a context of widespread armed settler violence, with the presence of armed settlers in the autonomous regions having been continuously increasing and encroaching on communal lands” (see 8. Unequal or restricted access to resources (including land)).¹¹²

In Türkiye, allegations of the excessive use of force by the Turkish Government against demonstrators increased dramatically following the 2016 failed coup attempt.¹¹³ Since then, emergency powers granted to the national security forces and law enforcement officials following the failed coup have been repeatedly used to justify state-led repression. In fact, although the state of emergency officially ended in July 2018, “its restrictive legal regime (...) continued under Law No. 7145, (rendering) emergency powers permanent.”¹¹⁴ This has involved restrictions of movement and the banning of public gatherings, detentions without charge, the stripping of passports of individuals dismissed from public service, including their families, and scope for security forces to “use force in dealing with threats.”¹¹⁵ In fact, in 2019, the HRC drew attention to security forces’ intense surveillance, harassment and detention of members of the ‘Gülenist movement’, as well as individuals allegedly associated with it.¹¹⁶ The UN’s Special Procedures such as the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment detailed the widespread use of torture and others forms of ill-treatment by government security forces, the military police, gendarmerie and police in the immediate aftermath of the failed coup in his 2017 annual report, following a mission to Türkiye the previous year.¹¹⁷ More recently, during Türkiye’s latest UPR cycle in 2025, the HRC called on Türkiye to investigate allegations of the excessive use of force, including arbitrary detentions and arrests, extraterritorial abductions, and enforced disappearances, among other violations.¹¹⁸

In Mozambique, state-led repression has been particularly salient during demonstrations in the context of elections. Earlier demonstrations in 2015 drew attention from the Committee on Torture, which raised concern about allegations of “unlawful killings, including extrajudicial executions, by members of the police force.”¹¹⁹ In 2021, allegations and reports of serious human rights violations and human rights abuses committed by both national security forces and armed groups emerged, particularly in the context of the conflict in Cabo Delgado province.¹²⁰ Most recently, OHCHR has explicitly denounced continued state-led repression following elections in late 2024.¹²¹

Unequal access to justice/rule of law

The unequal access to justice and rule of law was a key theme in the UN human rights system’s reporting across a range of settings examined, both in our ‘From Signals to Action’ report and this working paper. Our previous report found that the loss of access to justice reported across the UN human rights system in the lead up to five conflict outbreaks examined was aligned with the causes of those conflicts.¹²² Further, issues and/or inequalities pertaining to the access to justice and the rule of law were among the most commonly mentioned early warning signs in the human rights system’s reporting, for example poor and uneven access to justice in the lead-up to the Malian war in 2012. Specific reports offered a clear picture of a country that was failing to extend state authority to its peripheries, leaving large communities out of the scope of its state-led governance, and excluding women from meaningful recourse to the courts. These findings align with the stated causes of the 2012 uprising, as armed groups attempted to secede from a country that was failing to provide its population with a sense of justice.¹²³

The deterioration of the rule of law is often a gradual process happening over a number of years.¹²⁴ Given this, the UN human rights system is often well placed to evaluate and bring sustained attention to

deteriorations in the independence of the rule of law and its effects on individuals and groups' political, civil and legal rights. In fact, recent HRC Resolution 59/L.6 (2025) underlined the importance of an independent and impartial judiciary "to prevent and fight corruption and to address its negative impact on human rights, in line with the rule of law and the right to a fair trial, to access to justice and to an effective remedy, without discrimination of any kind."¹²⁵

Hungary's 2021 UPR cycle was particularly receptive to the deteriorating situation of the rule of law within the country, with serious consequences for access to justice. The HRC noted that since 2011, "judicial independence had been under constant attack and systematically undermined by the governing majority" in Hungary, with a severe impact on the enjoyment of human rights..¹²⁶ The Fundamental Law was highlighted in particular as being used as a "tool to undermine the principles of the rule of law," a sign of the increasing concentration of power in the country.¹²⁷ The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has drawn particular attention to the persisting barriers to women and girls' access to justice, particularly those facing intersecting forms of discrimination.¹²⁸ Similarly, in Mozambique, the UPR process emphasized continued obstacles in the independence and impartiality of the judiciary, with severe consequences for human rights violations, as well as several recommendations in 2015 and 2021 to strengthen judicial institutions' independence and impartiality.¹²⁹ The UN human rights system reporting has equally noted women's limited access to the formal judicial system, relying instead on customary law for enforcement of their rights, particularly in the country's northern provinces.¹³⁰

The case of Nicaragua offers specifically valuable insights on the connections between unequal access to justice and rule of law and increasing concentrations of power. As former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein argued shortly after the eruption of state-repressed protests in 2018, "the violence and repression seen in Nicaragua since demonstrations began in April are products of the systematic erosion of human rights over the years, and highlight the overall fragility of institutions and the rule of law."¹³¹ During Nicaragua's latest UPR in 2024, the Human Rights Council expressed alarm at the erosion of the rule of law since the 2018 protests, the independence of the judiciary, and the separation of powers, as well as the use of the rule of law to systematically persecute actual or perceived opponents to the Government.¹³² The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has also brought sustained and repeated attention to the deteriorating rule of law in Nicaragua. In fact, references to unequal access to justice were found in all of the UN High Commissioner's annual reports on Nicaragua between 2019 and 2024, the most recently available at the time of research.¹³³

The language in the High Commissioner's reports became stronger over time, highlighting in 2024 the politically motivated discrimination, and attributing the lack of access to justice, rule of law, and the loss of civic space to the Government. For example, in his 2023 annual report, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights indicated a "pattern of systematic violations of due process guarantees and the right to a fair trial of persons perceived to be opponents of the Government."¹³⁴ In 2024, a similar report clearly attributed the unequal access to justice to the increasing concentration of power in the country, arguing that "the persecution of actual and perceived political opponents in Nicaragua has been enabled by the control of the executive branch of the Government over the justice system."¹³⁵

Treaty Bodies such as the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women have also highlighted the issue of unequal access to justice in Nicaragua, particularly for Indigenous, Afrodescendent Peoples, and lesbian and transgender women, including legislation allowing for the cancellation of the legal status and confiscation of LGBTI women's organizations' assets considered critical of the Government.¹³⁶ Most recently, in reaction to a constitutional reform entered into force in February 2025, the UN human rights system has pointed to this reform as "a final blow to the rule of law. (...) effectively reduc(ing) the judicial, legislative and electoral powers of the State to mere 'bodies' to be 'coordinated' by the presidency."¹³⁷ Further, the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua argued that the regime "has deliberately transformed the country into an authoritarian State where no independent institutions remain, opposition voices are silenced,

and the population – both inside and outside Nicaragua – faces persecution, forced exile, and economic retaliation.”¹³⁸

Similarly strong connections exist between the increased concentration of power and eroding rule of law in Türkiye, as highlighted in the UN human rights system’s reporting since 2016. Türkiye’s most recent UPR process this year clearly highlighted that since the 2016 coup attempt, “judicial independence had undergone serious degradation following the mass dismissal of judges and prosecutors and the structural ‘reforms’ and consequent deficiencies in the judicial system as a result of executive overreach in contravention of the separation of powers.”¹³⁹ Special Rapporteurs such as for the independence of judges and lawyers have denounced judge convictions as “a gross attack on the independence of the judiciary in Türkiye.”¹⁴⁰ However, the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression highlighted in his 2017 report that the executive branch’s tightening control of judicial institutions had begun earlier, following the split between the ruling Justice and Development Party and the ‘Gülenist movement’ in 2014.¹⁴¹

Systemic, institutionalized corruption

The connections between corruption, authoritarianism and human rights, while not entirely predictable and often complex, are equally important to consider. Transparency International has provided solid scholarship on the relationship between corruption and authoritarianism, arguing that corruption, autocracy and human rights “can become a vicious circle, in which the deterioration of meaningful democracy allows corruption to go unchecked, which in turn facilitates human rights abuses that further cement authoritarian modes of governance.”¹⁴² This cycle implies that corruption may enable human rights violations by both undermining a state’s capacity to respect and protect human rights, and enabling political leaders in authoritarian settings to avoid accountability for their actions.¹⁴³

Further, systemic corruption - where a pattern of corrupt practices is embedded within a system - provides autocratic leaders with “unrestrained discretion when deciding who to prosecute,” often facilitating the targeting and discrimination of certain population groups, and a “vital governing tool” to suppress dissenting voices, including the press.¹⁴⁴ Indeed, settings with existing systemic and/or institutionalised corruption often also reveal human rights violations, affecting civil, political, legal rights, economic, social and cultural rights, and undermining the rule of law. This is reflected in recent HRC Resolution 59/L.6, which took a significant step in recognising the negative impact of widespread corruption on the enjoyment of human rights, not least that corruption “frequently results in discriminatory access to public services and goods.”¹⁴⁵ Notably, the Resolution argued that corruption “is even more damaging in times of crisis, has the potential to seriously undermine good governance around the world, erodes public trust in government and constitutes an obstacle to work to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.”¹⁴⁶ Further, it encouraged the mechanisms of the Human Rights Council to consider and address this issue, within their existing mandates, underlining the importance of the UPR and the Treaty Bodies “in raising awareness and strengthening the commitment to tackle the negative impact of corruption on the enjoyment of human rights.”¹⁴⁷

Our ‘From Signals to Action’ report included corruption as a key human rights indicator of violent conflict.¹⁴⁸ Unequal access to essential resources, economic inequality, and corruption are often grouped together as a precursor to conflict, with serious consequences for economic, social and cultural rights.¹⁴⁹ Further, data collected across the UN’s human rights system reporting up to five years preceding various conflict outbreaks revealed recurrent allegations and the persistence of corruption, particularly within judiciary systems.¹⁵⁰ In the case of Syria, the Human Rights Council explicitly highlighted deep-seated corruption, alongside injustice and discrimination, as the key underlying grievances leading to the 2011 protests.¹⁵¹

Similarly, the UN’s human rights system’s reporting on Nicaragua since the eruption of heavily

suppressed anti-government protests in April 2018 has highlighted the connections between corruption and impunity of the Nicaraguan government. In 2021, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) dedicated a section and several recommendations to corruption in its concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Nicaragua. The Committee expressed concern about persisting high levels of corruption and impunity in the State party.¹⁵² Further, the CESCR recommended the guarantee of transparency and accountability in the public administration, effective implementation of anti-corruption measures to combat impunity, and the adoption of measures for the protection of victims of corruption, including lawyers, activists, whistle-blowers and witnesses.¹⁵³ One year later, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights' 2022 report highlighted high levels of corruption and limited access to public information as a key issue in Nicaragua leading to a lack of transparency and accountability.¹⁵⁴

Evidence of corruption also appeared in the UN's human rights reporting in Türkiye, Mozambique and Hungary. In each of these cases, the HRC has drawn direct links between the presence of systemic, institutionalized corruption and increasing concentrations of power and resources. For example, Türkiye's UPR cycle in 2025 clearly stated that corruption "had long been a significant problem, deeply entrenched in various sectors, including the judiciary, law enforcement, the political elite, and public procurement processes," and that "a key driver was the concentration of power in the executive branch."¹⁵⁵ In Mozambique, the HRC also drew attention to corruption in its 2017 UPR process, which "seriously undermined the State's capacity to fulfil human rights obligations, with a disproportionate impact on those living in poverty."¹⁵⁶ The State has also recognized corruption as a factor of political and economic vulnerability, inequality and exclusion, including during election periods.¹⁵⁷ Similarly, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders has argued with regards to Hungary, although applicable to other contexts, that while women human rights defenders, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex defenders, defenders promoting economic, social and cultural rights and environmentalist organizations, whistle-blowers are specifically targeted, these "play a vital role in exposing corruption, fraud and mismanagement."¹⁵⁸

EROSION OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC EQUALITY AND CIVIC SPACE

The third group includes factors highlighting the erosion of socio-economic equality and civic space. These factors elucidate how increasing concentrations of power both heighten inequalities in access to resources (including land) and erode civic space. As the 'Pathways for Peace' report found, high levels of inequality across groups, including unequal access to resources, is one of the most important factors driving violent conflict.¹⁵⁹ This section also highlights how restrictions on press, academic and artistic freedom and the rise of nationalist rhetoric and scapegoating within highly centralized settings may increase the risks of violent conflict.

Unequal or restricted access to resources (including land)

Structural resource scarcity refers to an uneven distribution of resources where some groups within a society have limited access to resources. Unequal or restricted access to essential resources (e.g. food, water, land, healthcare and education) may exacerbate economic inequalities, and when combined with factors such as poor governance, stagnant economies and ethnic and/or political tensions, can exacerbate grievances and lead to a heightened risk of conflict. The 'From Signals to Action' report found "notable, and often repeated, warnings about inequality, lack of access to resources, differing treatment of protected groups and other violations of economic, social and cultural rights" across the five conflict case studies examined.¹⁶⁰ These ranged from unequal access to land leading to land-related disputes in Mali prior to the outbreak of the 2012 civil war, to land confiscations and restricted access to healthcare and education as early signs of

deep-rooted discrimination against Rohingya Muslims and the escalating risk of violence prior to conflict outbreak in October 2016 and August 2017. In other cases such as in the lead up to the South Sudan civil war in 2013, issues of socio-economic inequality, violations of economic, social and cultural rights and access to resources such as healthcare and sanitation provided important signals of growing conflict risks, although these remained scattered across the HRC's reporting.¹⁶¹

Among recent cases examined, the UN human rights system has brought significant attention to the issue of land inequality in its reporting on Nicaragua. Indeed, the Nicaragua case is key for understanding how increasing concentrations of power may increase resource inequalities, heightening tensions and the risk of violence. Much like the issues of unequal access to justice, deteriorating rule of law, and the normalization of discriminatory and exclusionary policies and discourses, reports of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights between 2019 and 2024 have consistently reiterated concern over growing unequal access to land in Nicaragua and its effects on the enjoyment of ESCR, particularly for women, Indigenous and Afro-descendent peoples. In 2023, the High Commissioner argued that “land occupation by settlers has severely affected the human rights of Indigenous Peoples, including economic, social and cultural rights,” with many losing access to their lands and territories, particularly in the North and South Caribbean Coast Autonomous Regions.¹⁶² This land loss has prevented them from collecting water and carrying out agricultural, hunting and gathering activities that are “essential not only for their right to food but also for the preservation of their culture.”¹⁶³

Further, the HRC-mandated Group of Experts on Nicaragua has detailed the connections between the Government's expanding economic and political control over autonomous regions, increasing violence in territories inhabited by Indigenous and Afro-descendent peoples, and state-led repression against these communities.¹⁶⁴ The 2023 report by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination drew attention to “attacks and illegal invasions by settlers and non-Indigenous persons in Indigenous territories,” which had generated “serious conflicts and violence over access to land and natural resources.”¹⁶⁵ One year later, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights noted continued reports of violence in these territories, including killings, gender-based violence, deliberate burning of homes and illegal land and property appropriation.¹⁶⁶ These examples highlight how the expansion of control over autonomous lands, driving increasing land inequality, has led to instances of violence.

Meanwhile, the UN human rights system's reporting on Türkiye, Mozambique and Hungary has also elevated issues of unequal access to resources, including education and health, particularly for ethnic and minority groups. Hungary's 2016 and 2021 UPR processes highlighted the continuing segregation of Roma children at various levels of education, including Roma girls.¹⁶⁷ More recently this year, the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to education warned against widening inequalities in Hungary's public education system, with poverty and marginalisation as the main structural barriers to education access, particularly for Roma children.¹⁶⁸ The same claims have been brought forth by multiple Treaty Bodies in reporting on Türkiye, particularly with regards to women, Kurds, children of migrant workers, persons with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups, as well as women's access to sexual and reproductive health services, especially those belonging to ethnic minorities and rural women.¹⁶⁹ Regional disparities in education access have been exacerbated by the consequences of the 2023 earthquakes in Türkiye (and Syria) in affected regions.¹⁷⁰ Finally, in Mozambique, both the UN's Special Procedures and past UPRs have flagged women's insecure access to land rights, as well as unequal access to health services as “indicators of structural discrimination against women and girls and denial of their sexual and reproductive health rights.”¹⁷¹

Overall, this research suggests that **within authoritarian settings, where the concentration and consolidation of economic power or influence in the hands of a few can increase socioeconomic inequalities, unequal or restricted access to resources is an important factor driving violence and potential violent conflict.** This aligns with the 2018 United Nations and World Bank ‘Pathways for Peace’ report, which found that high levels of inequality across groups, including resources, is one of the most important factors driving

violent conflict.¹⁷² In this sense, while authoritarianism itself may not cause conflict, its strong tendency to drive inequality amongst groups and to limit access to resources is a strong risk factor for violent conflict.

Restrictions on press, academic and artistic freedom

Restrictions on press, academic and artistic freedom are often one of the first indicators of shrinking civic space, and one of the first areas targeted to control and repress critical voices, including within authoritarian settings. The 2025 Global Peace Index report argued that since 2013, freedom of the press has deteriorated across all regions and government types, although authoritarian regimes recorded the worst scores in both 2013 and 2023.¹⁷³ The most severely impacted countries were those with hybrid government types combining authoritative and democratic elements, all of which recorded deteriorations in press freedom over the past decade.¹⁷⁴ Indeed, the recent 59th session of the Human Rights Council addressed the connections between the erosion of democracy and freedom of expression, including in the case of Hungary. As the Artistic Freedom Initiative argued, framing restrictions on artistic, journalistic and academic freedom as propaganda and censorship means these become human rights issues liable to lead to human rights violations.¹⁷⁵

Our 'From Signals to Action' report quantified attacks on freedom of expression, including press freedom, across five conflict case studies as a key indicator of shrinking civic space, and early warning sign of violent conflict. As the report highlights, "restrictions on freedom of opinion and expression and/or violence against civic space actors or those who express dissenting or unpopular views may silence critical voices and ultimately shrink civic space."¹⁷⁶ In the lead up to conflict outbreak in Syria (2011), Mali (2012), South Sudan (2013) and Myanmar (2017), the HRC widely reported on violations of freedom of press and association, detailing sustained government efforts to suppress and restrict freedom of opinion and expression, particularly freedom of the press.¹⁷⁷

Among the cases examined for this paper, the UN human rights system's reporting in Nicaragua, Mozambique, Hungary and Türkiye has, in each case, raised concern over increasing restrictions on press freedom, particularly through government legislation. In Türkiye, the government has "dismantled free and independent media" over the past decade, a process severely accelerated since the 2016 failed attempted coup which introduced a series of emergency decree laws enabling the mass liquidation of independent, oppositional and minority media outlets accused of affiliation with the 'Gülenist movement.'¹⁷⁸ The UN's Special Procedures have argued that counter-terrorism legislation, including the Disinformation (Censorship) Law, the Anti-Terror Law (Law no. 3713), and the Internet Law (Law no. 5651), has been used against the right of freedom of expression.¹⁷⁹ In Türkiye's latest 2025 UPR process, the HRC encouraged the Government to revise the Media Law and the Law on the Regulation of Publications on the Internet.¹⁸⁰ Similarly, in Hungary, freedom of expression was one of the first areas under pressure when Prime Minister Viktor Orbán took power in 2010, with the first significant concentration of media in the hands of the Government visible through its Media Law.¹⁸¹ The Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression first warned of the Media Law in 2011, arguing it could be used to curb press freedom, while the HRC has called on the Government to revise the law in line with the right to freedom of opinion and expression.¹⁸²

Similar strategies emerged in the UN human rights system's reporting on Mozambique and Nicaragua. Mozambique's 2015 UPR process highlighted that the right to freedom of expression had been suppressed in recent years through government-led criminal defamation laws.¹⁸³ Several years later, the 2021 UPR argued that legal provisions continued to present challenges for press freedom.¹⁸⁴ Notably, in the context of post-election violence and state repression following presidential elections in 2024, OHCHR reported widespread restrictions to media freedoms, "including attacks, intimidation and harassment of journalists, and intermittent internet and blocks to mobile network services."¹⁸⁵ In Nicaragua, Special Procedures, Treaty Bodies and the Group of Experts on Nicaragua have all reported on the ongoing systematic repression of

the media.¹⁸⁶

While less frequently addressed, restrictions on academic and artistic freedom have also brought serious consequences on individuals' political, civil and legal rights, particularly within authoritarian settings where leaders have deliberately targeted academics, artists, musicians and others to suppress and restrict opposition voices and activities and, in so doing, shrink civic space. In the aftermath of the 2016 failed attempted coup in Türkiye, Emergency Decree Law no. 672 was reportedly used to blacklist students and parents, shut down universities, higher education institutions, foundations and associations with alleged links to the 'Gülenist movement' considered a terrorist organization.¹⁸⁷ Meanwhile, in the artistic sector, the Special Rapporteur on freedom of expression has pointed to funding restrictions and censorship as the two main barriers for artistic freedom of expression in Türkiye.¹⁸⁸ In Hungary, the HRC has repeatedly urged the Government to reconsider a law targeting the Central European University, while sources beyond the UN human rights system have detailed the increasing centralized government control over Hungarian arts and cultural organizations.¹⁸⁹

Another key government strategy employed to control and repress critical voices is the bureaucratic encroachment of a range of institutions, including media, cultural and artistic institutions, eroding their independence. Much like authoritarian rulers may co-opt national institutions to gain control over resources, so might these rulers co-opt media, cultural and artistic institutions to secure control over editorial lines, leadership and/or financial structures, artistic programmes, and censor real or perceived critical voices within these sectors. Across the four cases examined, the UN human rights system has reported on gradual, increasing restrictions on a variety of institutions. In Türkiye, the crackdown on institutions has occurred through "government takeovers" of various media outlets. Some examples include the administrative board takeover of the Zaman media group, which resulted in a change of editorial policy, as well as changes in the Turkish Arts Council shifting decision-making power from artists' associations to State-appointed officials.¹⁹⁰ More recently, in Hungary, the Special Rapporteur on the right to education sounded the alarm over the erosion of academic freedom, notably through the transformation of 21 public universities into foundation-run institutions with close political ties.¹⁹¹ Finally, in Nicaragua, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has drawn attention to multiple cases where the academic governance of universities is increasingly tied to partisan political interests, leading to restrictions of the right to education and freedom of expression.¹⁹² As the Group of Experts on Nicaragua argued, the Government has targeted universities as part of a "widespread repressive campaign, eliminating their autonomy and turning them into centers of political control."¹⁹³

Rise of nationalist rhetoric and scapegoating

For the purpose of this working paper, nationalist rhetoric and scapegoating refers to the use of inflammatory language or speech by state/government actors deliberately targeting specific population groups, and identifying certain individuals or groups as scapegoats for political, economic and/or social issues in a given authoritarian setting. In this sense, the rise of nationalist rhetoric and scapegoating within authoritarian settings is related to the targeting of minorities and/or specific population groups, as well as the use of dehumanizing propaganda, particularly of these population groups (see 3. Use of dehumanizing propaganda (including through hate speech) and 4. Targeting of minorities and/or specific population groups). Nationalist rhetoric and scapegoating may also be reflected in discriminatory and exclusionary policies and discourses (see 1. Normalization of discriminatory, exclusionary policies and/or discourses).

The UN High Commissioner on Human Rights has been vocal in denouncing the rise of nationalist rhetoric and scapegoating by the Government in Nicaragua, as well as direct effects on human rights. In 2019, the High Commissioner's report drew attention to the fact that government authorities had publicly blamed human rights defenders for their "instrumental" role in the 2018 coup attempt in Nicaragua, much like the language used to discredit human rights defenders and other population groups in Türkiye

following the 2016 failed attempted coup.¹⁹⁴ This situation, as the High Commissioner argued, has had a “deterrent effect on the exercise of their rights to freedom of expression and association.”¹⁹⁵ More generally, the official narrative, established and sustained by the Government in Nicaragua following the 2018 protests, involved labelling those individuals who had taken part in the protests, whether human rights defenders, activists, students journalists, lawyers, or healthcare workers, among others, as “traitors, terrorists or coup plotters.”¹⁹⁶ In Hungary, HRC reporting in recent years has highlighted similar practices whereby the Hungarian Government has stigmatised rhetoric on multiple population groups, particularly LGBTQ+ persons, Roma people, asylum-seekers, refugees and migrants.¹⁹⁷ Similar warnings to those described in Türkiye and Nicaragua of persisting stigmatization and inflammatory language used by government officials against human rights defenders, often portrayed as “foreign agents,” have also appeared in Special Procedures’ reports.¹⁹⁸

However, the most prominent form of dissemination of nationalist rhetoric and scapegoating across most of the settings examined has been campaigns of intimidation and delegitimization of targeted individuals and groups, whether through government-supported media, official public statements and/or discourses. In Nicaragua, a group of 11 UN Special Rapporteurs and Working Groups, including the Special Rapporteurs on the situation of human rights defenders, the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association, the right to freedom of opinion and expression, among others, denounced a smear campaign aiming to discredit and vilify human rights defenders as “terrorists” and “coup-mongers.”¹⁹⁹ More recently, a press article authored by a government official was flagged as accusing the Catholic Church of being a criminal organization and a supporter of the attempted coup d’état during the 2018 protests, which the High Commissioner argued posed severe implications for religious freedom.²⁰⁰ In Hungary, the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression has similarly reported on extensive instances of pro-government media vilifying human rights defenders, LGBT activists, journalists, and people working for refugees and migrants as “foreign agents, traitors and ‘Hungary-haters’ or ‘non-Hungarians’”.²⁰¹ Parallel discriminatory and xenophobic rhetoric against migrants, used by politicians in Türkiye prior to the 2023 election, has appeared in the UN Treaty Bodies’ reporting.²⁰²

CROSS-CUTTING FINDINGS

Across a wide variety of settings, the authors found that increased centralization of political and economic power interacted with human rights risks in a similar manner. While of course each setting is unique, the following section draws some broad cross-cutting conclusions which inform the recommendations outlined below.

1. **Centralization is a vicious cycle.**

Across the examined cases, the centralization of political power and resources within a small elite appeared to gain momentum over time, leading to ever-increasing control by the center (either a person or an elite group). This was demonstrated not only by broad national trends and global rankings by organizations like Freedom House and Transparency International, but also within the information produced by the UN's human rights system. Consolidation of control over the political and economic levers of power is highly correlated with a loss of political, civil and legal rights, as well as economic, social and cultural rights. This finding aligns with other studies on the tendency of authoritarianism to become increasingly entrenched over time, even in the presence of apparently democratic institutions.²⁰³

2. **Not all authoritarianism is the same.**

Significant differences exist between military regimes, single-party governments, and personalist regimes. Military regimes are more likely to use force against opposition, and may therefore be most directly linked to the outbreak of violent conflict. Personalist regimes are the least predictable, lacking institutional checks and the ability to shift gears quickly. In contrast, single-party governments, or where one party holds significant power (e.g. Nicaragua, Mozambique), may more gradually and imperceptibly consolidate power through institutions and the erosion of political space. The type of governance system also appears to affect the speed and trajectory of human rights erosion: more institutionalized forms of authoritarianism appear to move more slowly towards the loss of political, civil and legal rights (though may also establish more durable forms of repression).

3. **Inequality amongst groups is a driver of conflict risks.**

Almost by definition, authoritarianism generates greater inequality amongst groups. By consolidating power and resources within a small elite, the national effects are almost uniformly a loss of access for groups not linked to that elite. Our cases strongly align with the 2018 United Nations and World Bank 'Pathways for Peace' report, which found that horizontal inequality (across groups) is one of the most direct drivers of violent conflict.²⁰⁴ This finding has important implications for conflict prevention actors: if addressing inequality amongst groups is an effective conflict prevention approach, then a greater focus on authoritarianism may be needed.

4. **But not all conflict starts the same way.**

Especially in highly centralized settings, violent conflict may be triggered by exclusionary politics (e.g. ethnic groups being left out of an election). Weak state capacity resulting from decades of corruption and mismanagement can create openings for violent insurgencies (e.g. Mali in 2012). In some cases, the consolidation of resources and exclusion of access to natural resources can be the fuel for an insurgency. This means predicting the exact conditions for the outbreak of conflict is very difficult.

5. **Authoritarianism is a threat multiplier.**

The high correlation between increasing authoritarianism and the erosion of human rights leads to a

possible finding that centralization of power accelerates and magnifies human rights risks. This was evident across our cases in the steep decline in rights of free expression, freedom of assembly, and other rights associated with open electoral processes. But it also appeared in rising trends of arbitrary detention, loss of due process, and targeting of minorities and/or specific population groups. While greater research may be required, an emerging finding from this research suggests that consolidation of power and resources may be a necessary but not sufficient precursor to many violent conflicts.

6. Repression has a short- and long-term effect.

In the immediate term, repressive government tactics may appear to generate calm and prevent escalation. This can give rise to outward appearances of positive trends – reduced levels of violence, weakening of armed groups, even positive indicators of institutional capacity. This is where the UN's human rights system provides unique indicators of longer-term risks. As the cases of Nicaragua and Türkiye indicate in particular, the gradual erosion of political space and access to resources is often a precursor to violent conflict, even where other indicators may appear positive.

7. Institutions can be misleading.

The presence of national institutions ostensibly designed to protect political, civil, legal and economic, social and cultural rights can be misleading, especially in highly authoritarian contexts. In all the cases considered above, elections took place (but were subject to co-opted institutions or widespread intimidation); the media was legally protected (but in fact harassed and censored); opposition parties were permitted (but faced inordinate barriers to meaningful action); and courts and legislatures were in place (but were broadly dependent on the central elite). Instead of examining the presence of institutions, our research suggests that greater attention should be paid to the protections of rights they provide, including over time.

8. Access to resources matters.

While the loss of political rights is often fairly visible (e.g. laws restricting political party formation or harsh crackdowns on protestors), the loss of economic, social and cultural rights is often less publicly visible. However, by drawing on the indicators produced by the UN's human rights system, it becomes clear that higher levels of political concentration are paralleled by increasing inequality around access to resources. A key example is Nicaragua, where the human rights system has consistently reiterated concern over growing unequal access to land and its effects on the enjoyment of ESCR, particularly for women, Indigenous and Afro-descendent peoples. The UN's human rights system's reporting on Türkiye, Mozambique and Hungary has also elevated issues of unequal access to resources including education and health, particularly for ethnic and minority groups. This suggests that within authoritarian settings, where the concentration and consolidation of economic power or influence in the hands of a few can increase socio-economic inequalities, unequal or restricted access to resources is an important factor driving violence and potential violent conflict.

9. Divisive rhetoric is a powerful early warning tool.

The UN's human rights system produces an enormous amount of data on how national leaders target and scapegoat minorities and/or specific population groups through media and public discourses, often highlighting similar strategies across contexts and settings. [Ex: increasing restrictions on press freedom, particularly through government legislation, in Nicaragua, Mozambique, Hungary and Türkiye; campaigns of intimidation and delegitimization of targeted individuals and groups through government-supported media, official public statements and/or discourses]. The cases above suggest that an important trend in the lead-up to conflict is rising nationalist rhetoric and scapegoating in the media. This finding aligns with a growing body of scholarship on the

relationship between authoritarianism, media and violent conflict.²⁰⁵ However, cases also highlight how restrictions on academic and artistic freedom, while less frequently addressed, have also brought serious consequences on individuals' political, civil and legal rights, particularly in settings where authoritarian leaders deliberately target academics, artists, musicians and others to suppress and restrict opposition voices and activities.

10. Corruption and human rights are deeply connected.

The connections between corruption, authoritarianism and human rights, while not new, could be more systematically highlighted across the UN's human rights mechanisms. Across the settings examined, the human rights system has drawn direct links between systemic, institutionalized corruption and increasing concentrations of power and resources. Corruption has facilitated the targeting, discrimination of specific population groups, and suppression of dissenting voices, including through the press, as a way for elites to maintain dominance within centralized settings. The examples outlined above offer a valuable opportunity for the UPR and the Treaty Bodies, among other mechanisms and within existing mandates, to systematically address ~~examples~~ corruption as a conflict risk factor. The recent HRC resolutions recognising the negative impact of widespread corruption on the enjoyment of human rights offer an important step towards highlighting these connections. The 2025 Peacebuilding Architecture Review also offers a unique opportunity to more systematically address the role of corruption as a risk multiplier of violence, armed conflict and insecurity.²⁰⁶

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PREVENTING CONFLICT IN CENTRALIZED POLITICAL SYSTEMS

The cross-cutting findings above demonstrate that the centralization of political and economic power has an important impact on the risks of human rights decline, and can therefore be considered a risk multiplier for violent conflict. At the same time, the pathways that lead to conflict are not uniform, and some settings can remain calm through periods of enduring authoritarianism.

Drawing from the case studies examined, as well as examples from previous research, policymakers and national leaders should consider the following steps to identify early warning signals of violent conflict, build institutional resilience, and prevent a slide into violent conflict. These are grouped into three areas: understanding the signals, entry points for action, and considerations for conflict prevention actors for preventing violent conflict.

USE THE HUMAN RIGHTS SYSTEM

The most important finding of this study is that the UN's human rights system produces unique and actionable early warning signals of violent conflict. This is particularly true in settings where political power and resources have been consolidated into a small elite in an authoritarian system. In fact, in some cases, the human rights system may generate the best indicators that a system is beginning to tilt towards violent conflict.

UNDERSTAND THE SIGNALS

- 1. Pay attention to regime type.** A highly militarized or personalized regime appears far more likely to slide quickly and directly into conflict. This is due to the likelihood of military regimes to use force and/or a single individual to act without institutional constraints. However, this does

not mean that institutionalized, single-party systems are immune to conflict risks. So-called ‘competitive authoritarianism’ can mask significant conflict risks beneath a veneer of institutional independence and capacity, requiring even greater attention to underlying signals of inequality.

2. **Move beyond political headlines.** Many of the cases involved attention grabbing headlines where leaders grabbed power, stayed beyond constitutional limits, or cracked down on political opposition. While these are important indicators of unrest, these do not tell the whole story. Instead, questions of access to justice, fair distribution and access to resources, and even questions of cultural preservation are often unseen drivers of conflict. The multilateral system’s preference for political indicators over more economically and socially-driven factors means leaders often miss important early warning signs.
3. **Analyze the political marketplace.** Across many of the cases, we found that a political marketplace approach illuminated early warning signals better than other disciplines. This means thinking about the relationship between the distribution of power and resources, how national and local policies may affect livelihoods and access, and the influence of trends like prices, scarcity, and prospects for young people.

ENTRY POINTS FOR ACTION

1. **Land and resources.** Whereas most mainstream conflict prevention approaches focus on equitable political settlements amongst parties and politicians, our findings suggest that an under-utilized entry point may be land and other natural resources. Building up a capacity to support the administration of these resources may open up key partnerships and opportunities for more innovative, impactful programming.
2. **Justice institutions.** One of the clearest advantages of the UN’s human rights system is its focus on justice institutions. The authors found ample evidence of the reporting of the UN’s Special Procedures containing recommendations and offering support for building more equitable and effective judicial capacity. Given that one of the most common factors preceding violent conflict is a sense of injustice and lack of recourse to judicial institutions, this is an important entry point. Particularly in highly authoritarian settings, building a check on unfettered executive authority may be the most important step that can be taken.
3. **Civil society as a partner.** Much attention has been given to the importance of political space for opposition parties in highly authoritarian settings. In this paper, the authors found a tendency to treat civil society as a hedge against abuses, a watchdog that can report independently on largely unaccountable leaders. This is important, but may overlook a more constructive role that civil society groups can play in partnering with governments to build resilience and governance capacities. A key argument in Rachel Kleinfeld’s *A Savage Order* is that “an escape from endemic violence, and from the consequent polarization of society, is only possible when governments and civil society work closely together.”²⁰⁷ This suggests that both government initiatives and social movements must work in tandem to achieve success.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR CONFLICT PREVENTION ACTORS

1. **Resist the gravitational pull of the executive.** There is a strong tendency within the international system to focus on executive power and processes. Overwhelmingly, international electoral support is provided to executive elections, and most conflict prevention efforts are directed towards political actors at the national level. However, as significant research has demonstrated, this creates unintended consequences: leaders find that executive power is the route to partnership with international players, and quickly realize that the penalties for concentrating power are far less than the benefits.²⁰⁸ Conflict prevention actors should explore

how to direct resources and political attention more towards local processes (e.g. municipal elections) where the risks of elite capture are lower and the possibilities for more inclusive outcomes are higher.

2. **Connect with local administrators.** The people who decide how land and access to resources are often local administrators, mayors, governors, or even lower-level bureaucrats working in ministries far from the center. These actors are often overlooked in traditional conflict prevention and mediation, but they are crucial in addressing questions of access to the resources that matter most in settings of declining human rights protections and growing authoritarianism. Developing a better understanding of local administrations, and dedicating resources to engaging in their work, is likely to deliver better outcomes.
3. **Focus on narrative spaces and tools.** Conflict prevention and resolution often targets the principal actors in conflict, aiming to shift their narratives about a given situation. However, as the cases demonstrate, public narrative spaces and social media are often where the most prominent trends appear. Dehumanizing and stigmatizing rhetoric can replicate and spread quickly, becoming a sort of political backdrop for harsh crackdowns, escalating positions, and violence. The authors found that the UN's human rights system is uniquely placed to capture these problematic trends.
4. **Make inclusion an end as well as a means.** Overwhelmingly, conflict prevention actors focus on inclusion as a means to resolving the risks of escalation. This means building mediation practices that include all parties as well as traditionally neglected groups such as women and youth. This is crucial and should not be overlooked. But our findings suggest that insufficient attention is being paid to inclusive political settlements themselves – how power and resources are distributed as a result of a mediation or resolution process. Conflict prevention actors should more clearly set benchmarks for success that indicate whether people have fair access to justice, resources, and existing levers of power.
5. **Employ economic tools more centrally in a strategy.** One of the corollaries of highly centralized forms of government is that they may be more susceptible to economic pressure. A single leader is directly implicated by a sanctions regime naming said leader as a target. A single military regime will be strongly affected by a banking freeze on their leaders. This may mean that economic tools are the most immediately relevant to reducing the risks of violent conflict. However, a note of caution is needed: in settings with a dominant small elite, nationally-based sanctions and efforts to isolate often have the unintended consequences of affecting innocent populations. Sanctions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), for example, have done little to affect the political trajectory of the leadership, but have resulted in enormous suffering for the citizens of the country. Well tailored, narrow approaches may be the most effective in the cases we considered in this study.

CONCLUSION

This working paper has explored how authoritarian systems concentrate political and economic power in ways that systematically erode human rights and create fertile ground for violent conflict. While authoritarianism does not inevitably produce conflict, our analysis makes clear that the combination of centralized political and economic power and a range of human rights factors significantly heightens the risks of violent conflict. The evidence collected from the UN's human rights system reporting on Nicaragua, Türkiye, Hungary, and Mozambique demonstrates that authoritarian practices are rarely isolated; they tend to coalesce into overlapping patterns of repression, marginalization, and corruption that weaken institutions and intensify social divides. In this sense, rising authoritarianism represents a structural risk multiplier for conflict and human rights decline.

A first conclusion is that early warning signals of conflict are consistently present within human rights reporting, often years before violence erupts. Factors such as discriminatory laws, politicized justice systems, restrictions on the press, and rising hate speech, among others, were all identified well in advance of serious escalation in past cases. This underscores the enduring value of the UN's human rights mechanisms: these mechanisms, especially when integrating ESCR analysis, can serve as predictive tools for early warning. Yet the challenge remains to ensure these signals are not only documented but also acted upon in real time. Prevention requires greater willingness by states and international organizations to treat human rights violations not only as moral failures but as practical indicators of growing instability.

Second, authoritarian practices are adaptive and resilient. Leaders often draw on legal reforms, emergency policies and laws, and security narratives to institutionalize control and normalize repression. Over time, this corrodes the independence of the judiciary, silences the media, and entrenches inequality in access to resources. The case studies above show that once these mechanisms are consolidated, reversing them becomes far more difficult. This highlights the importance of engaging at an earlier stage, before the concentration of power eliminates most avenues for accountability.

Third, structural inequalities emerge as a central risk factor. Where authoritarian systems restrict access to land, education and/or healthcare, grievances deepen, particularly among marginalized communities. As the 'Pathways for Peace' report emphasized, inequality between groups is among the strongest drivers of violent conflict. In the settings examined in this paper, these inequalities were not incidental but actively reinforced by state policies and/or laws. This suggests that addressing socio-economic rights is as crucial to conflict prevention as safeguarding civil and political freedoms.

Finally, this research demonstrates that authoritarianism is not only a domestic issue but also a transnational one. Practices of repression, surveillance, and disinformation diffuse across borders, while authoritarian regimes often share strategies and support each other in avoiding accountability. For conflict prevention actors, this means that effective strategies must be both local and global, strengthening domestic resilience while also countering external enablers of authoritarian rule.

In sum, the main lesson of this working paper is that preventing violent conflict in authoritarian settings requires a sharper integration of human rights analysis into early warning systems, more decisive international responses to documented violations, and sustained support to civil society. Authoritarian governments are durable, but they are not immune to pressure. In the context of the UN80 initiative, the 2025 Peacebuilding Architecture Review, among other UN processes, a prevention agenda grounded in all human rights — political, civil, legal, and economic, social and cultural — is essential to prevent the slippery slope from repression to violence. Human rights mechanisms provide detailed, credible evidence of risks that, if acted upon, can slow or even prevent this slide. The central challenge is to move from recognition to action, translating the signals of human rights decline into timely preventive strategies.

ANNEX 1: TABLE 1.0: FREEDOM STATUS UP TO FIVE YEARS PRECEDING CONFLICT OUTBREAK

According to Freedom House's reporting between 2007 and 2017, in all countries examined in our previous 'From Signals to Action' report except one, the level of freedom at least five years preceding conflict outbreak was described as 'Not free' or 'Partly free'. The exception, Mali, was described as 'Free' until 2013, following which its status changed abruptly as a result of the outbreak of the civil war in 2012. This change could be explained by the 2012 coup d'état, which accelerated the disintegration of Mali's territorial integrity as northern regions quickly fell under the control of the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad, a Tuareg separatist group, and Islamist groups. Our research shows that between 2008 and 2012, Mali witnessed a deterioration of its political, security and social fabric, culminating in a civil war.²⁰⁹ As such, these cases exhibit some correlation between the centralization of power and resources in the period preceding violent conflict.

	Syria	Mali	South Sudan/ Sudan	Myanmar	Ukraine (*1)	Russia
2007	Not free	Free	Not free	Not free	Free	Not free
2008	Not free	Free	Not free	Not free	Free	Not free
2009	Not free	Free	Not free	Not free	Free	Not free
2010	Not free	Free	Not free	Not free	Free	Not free
2011	Not free	Free	Not free	Not free	Partly free	Not free
2012	Not free	Free	(*2) Not free	Not free	Partly free	Not free
2013	Not free	Not free	Not free	Not free	Partly free	Not free
2014	Not free	Partly free	Not free	Not free	Partly free	Not free
2015	Not free	Partly free	Not free	(*3) Not free	Partly free	Not free
2016	Not free	Partly free	Not free	Not free	Partly free	Not free
2017	Not free	Partly free	Not free	Partly free	Partly free	Not free

Source: Data collected by the authors from Freedom House's reporting between 2007 and 2017. See Freedom House, 'Freedom in the World', <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world> (last accessed 20 October 2025). The combination of the overall score awarded for political rights and the overall score awarded for civil liberties, after being equally weighted, determines the status of 'Free', 'Partly Free', or 'Not Free'. For more on Freedom House's methodology, see Freedom House, 'Freedom in the World Research Methodology', <https://freedomhouse.org/reports/freedom-world/freedom-world-research-methodology> (last accessed 20 October 2025)

Notes: (*1) The 'From Signals to Action' report included the 2014 Russo-Ukrainian war as a case study, which involved a conflict between two states (Ukraine and Russia). This case was excluded from the present paper's analysis as it would require a more complex explanation of the dynamics between violations of political, civil and legal rights and economic, social and cultural rights in each state preceding the 2014 war. Nonetheless, to highlight the negative correlation between a country's freedom status and the enjoyment of political, civil and legal rights, both Ukraine and Russia were included in the above table. (*2) Given that South Sudan became an independent country in 2011, data prior to this date was collected for Sudan, including the territory of 'Southern Sudan,' which subsequently became South Sudan. From 2012, Freedom House included South Sudan as a standalone country with its independent ranking. (*3) Before 2015, Myanmar was referred to as Burma in Freedom House's annual global reports.

ANNEX 2: CASE STUDY SELECTION AND BACKGROUND

According to Freedom House, Nicaragua, Türkiye, Mozambique, and Hungary have experienced some of the worst declines in freedom in the last decade, with the highest decline noted in Nicaragua.²¹⁰ The following section offers an explanation for each of the case study examples selected for this working paper.

NICARAGUA

Large-scale anti-government protests, initially against the government's planned social security reforms and fuelled by long-term discontent, erupted across Nicaragua in April 2018 and were severely repressed by Nicaraguan police and pro-Government elements under President Daniel Ortega. Since then, the UN's human rights system has documented a rapid increase in human rights violations and severe crackdowns on civic space.²¹¹ Following the protests and gradually over the past years, the Government of President Daniel Ortega and Vice-President Rosario Murillo has "executed a phased strategy to entrench absolute control. To achieve this, it has systematically carried out serious human rights violations."²¹² These have taken on various forms, notably the "systematic criminalization of dissenting voices" through harassment, surveillance and persecution of an ever growing number of population groups.²¹³ These include, among others: human rights defenders, including women defenders, protesters, journalists, independent media employees, students, faculty and other university personnel, members of social organizations and political parties, Indigenous People, People of African descent, members of the campesino movement, and members of the Catholic Church, including their families. Concurrently, the Government has gradually centralized its power and formalized its control through a series of constitutional and legislative reforms, most recently in February 2025 when a broad constitutional reform placed almost unlimited powers in the hands of the presidency, seriously undermining the protection of human rights. In its latest report in February 2025, the HRC-mandated Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua, has called for "decisive international action to address these violations".²¹⁴ As of the time of writing, the World Press Freedom Index reported a dramatic loss of 30 rankings (from 44 to 14 out of 100 countries) compared to 2018.²¹⁵

The information produced by the Human Rights Council (specifically the Universal Periodic Reviews, including the latest review cycle in 2024, the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua,²¹⁶ the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Special Procedures,²¹⁷ Treaty Bodies, and OHCHR press releases since 2018) reveals significant and detailed coverage of human rights violations in Nicaragua, including patterns of violations during and in the years since the 2018 protests. In multiple cases, information produced by the HRC has explicitly connected human rights violations to the authoritarian practices under the Government of President Daniel Ortega and Vice-President Rosario Murillo.²¹⁸ These connections have equally been highlighted by international non-governmental organisations such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Freedom House, among others, as well as regional mechanisms such as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights' (IACHR) Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts, established in 2018 and operating from outside of Nicaragua.²¹⁹

The case of Nicaragua highlights the clear, albeit complex, connections between the gradual erosion of civil, legal and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights, and Ortega's authoritarian government. Further, it highlights the unique value of the information and analysis produced by the HRC-mandated mechanism Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua, which despite lack of access to the country has been able to document the strategies and consequences of the Nicaraguan government's authoritarian practices. This echoes previous research findings on the value of HRC-mandated accountability mechanisms, including the Commission of Inquiry in Syria and the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar from past examined cases, which provide essential information on ongoing human rights violations and human rights situations in a consistent manner, provided their mandate is extended. Our previous report 'From Signals to Action' suggested ways to further

leverage these HRC-created accountability mechanisms to bolster the HRC's early warning capacities, while systematically linking human rights reporting to these mechanisms.²²⁰

TÜRKIYE

The 2016 attempted coup in Türkiye may be considered a key accelerator of both the increasing concentration of power in Türkiye over the past decade and the simultaneous erosion of human rights in the country, with serious consequences for the independence of key institutions such as the judiciary. In fact, Freedom House has observed a dramatic decline in freedom in Turkey in the last ten years.²²¹ Despite the official end of the state of emergency in July 2018, established following the attempted coup, Türkiye's restrictive law regime has continued under Law No. 7145, enabling arbitrary detentions, movement restrictions, and providing scope for widespread state-led repression against a range of individuals perceived to be associated with the 'Gülenist movement.'²²² This legal regime has also enabled the normalization of discriminatory policies, particularly under counter-terrorism legislation, as a strategy for targeting an ever growing number of individuals suspected of involvement in the failed coup and/or allegedly linked to the Gülenist network (similarly to the aftermath of the 2018 protests in Nicaragua). These include human rights defenders, political activists, members of the judiciary, journalists, among others. The result has been the deterioration of civil, political and legal rights, as well as economic, social and cultural rights, further aggravated by the consequences of the 2023 earthquakes in the south-east of Türkiye (and Syria) in affected regions.

Information produced by the UN's human rights system, particularly Türkiye's UPR processes in 2025 and 2019, Treaty bodies, Special Procedures, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights reports, and OHCHR press releases highlights important connections between human rights violations and increasing centralization of power. Most recently, Türkiye's 2025 UPR process argued that the concentration of power in the hands of Türkiye's executive branch was a key driver of corruption, with severe impacts for human rights and the rule of law.²²³ The same process warned of the persisting stigmatization and inflammatory language used by government officials against human rights defenders, often portrayed as "foreign agents," as well as an increasing number of cases of hate speech, particularly targeting women in political discourse, LGBTI+ persons, asylum seekers, migrants, ethnic and religious minorities.²²⁴ Taken together, the information generated by the UN's human rights system covers all of the human rights factors identified for this research that tend to be present and come together in the lead up to violent conflict.

HUNGARY

According to Freedom House's 2025 report, Hungary has experienced a severe decline in freedom over the past decade.²²⁵ State targeting of LGBTQ+ individuals during Pride celebrations in March 2025 in Hungary highlight persisting targeting efforts by the government, which have also included minorities, women, and other population groups. A key strategy has been the dissemination of nationalist rhetoric and scapegoating, as well as the use of hate speech, particularly through the media and the press. In Hungary, freedom of expression was one of the first areas under pressure when Prime Minister Viktor Orbán took power in 2010, with the first significant concentration of media in the hands of the Government visible through its Media Law. In his 2017 report following a mission to Hungary one year earlier, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders argued that the concentration of media in the hands of the Government had reduced access for human rights defenders and civil society organizations.²²⁶ Similarly, the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression has reported on extensive instances of pro-government media vilifying human rights defenders, LGBT activists, journalists, and people working for refugees and migrants as "foreign agents, traitors and 'Hungary-haters' or 'non-Hungarians'."²²⁷

Indeed, the UN human rights system has exposed Hungary's increasing concentration of power and gradual deterioration of human rights, particularly the use of existing legislation for discriminatory and exclusionary purposes against specific population groups, most recently members of the LGBTQ+ community as well as Roma, migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and other minorities.²²⁸ This includes legislation used to target universities, higher education institutions, foundations and associations with alleged links to opposition voices and/or movements. Particularly notable within the human rights system is Hungary's UPR processes in 2021, 2016 and 2011.²²⁹ Hungary's 2021 UPR cycle was specifically receptive to the deteriorating situation of the rule of law, including the Fundamental Law which was highlighted as a sign of the increasing concentration of power in the country, with serious consequences for access to justice.²³⁰

MOZAMBIQUE

The case of Mozambique provides valuable insights into the connections between the erosion of human rights and widespread election and post-election violence, where the disproportionate use of force against protesters by security forces was ongoing at the time of writing. In fact, while state-led repression of anti-government protests in Nicaragua and Türkiye has been prevalent in the HRC's reporting in recent years, similar reporting in Mozambique has highlighted particularly salient repression around elections, most recently electoral violence resulting from presidential elections in November 2024. OHCHR has raised alarm over significant post-election violence, particularly the targeting of journalists, lawyers and human rights defenders, including those reporting on the irregularities of the election process, through arbitrary tensions, harassment and intimidation, as well as the systematic repression of the media.²³¹

Other strong areas of focus across the UN human rights system's reporting on Mozambique in the past years have included persisting inequalities, particularly with regards to access to justice and access to resources. Inequalities featured as a strong theme in Mozambique's 2015 UPR, with common use of terms such as 'exclusion' and 'inequality'. The structural discrimination of women was also a recurrent focus in reporting on Mozambique, with both UPR processes in 2015 and 2021 describing the increasing violence against women throughout the country.²³² As described in this paper, the HRC has highlighted persistent patterns of discrimination against women, girls and children in disadvantaged or vulnerable situations under customary law, particularly with regards to women's access to land and inheritance rights.²³³

END NOTES

1 In light of the United Kingdom's development of a new National Security Strategy that increases defence spending and revisits peace and development spending, dozens of political leaders, national security experts, academics, and community leaders, among others, have made the case that conflict prevention is "as important and effective as conventional defence strategies". See Lord McConnell of Glenscorrodale, 'UK Must Invest In Peace As Well As Defence To Make World A Safer Place, Says Labour Peer,' *HuffPost*, 18 June 2025, https://www.huffpost.co.uk/entry/uk-must-invest-in-peace-as-well-as-defence-to-make-world-a-safer-place-says-labour-peer_uk_6851b6e3e4b016fa8c6800ac; The Halo Trust, 'Prevention of conflict is better than having to rely on emergency aid,' 17 June 2025, <https://www.halotrust.org/news/an-open-letter-to-the-prime-minister/>.

2 The Human Rights Council's prevention mandate is explicitly outlined in the Council's broader mandate under UN General Assembly Resolution 60/251. See UNGA Res 60/251, 3 April 2006. Paragraph 5f of the Resolution states that the Council shall "contribute, through dialogue and cooperation, towards the prevention of human rights violations and respond promptly to human rights emergencies". This mandate has largely been understood in two parts. First, the HRC is mandated to help prevent human rights violations by focusing on the root causes of violence and building domestic human rights capacity and resilience (commonly referred to as primary prevention). Second, the mandate calls on the Council to respond to human rights emergencies, that is to prevent a widening or deepening crisis when early warning signs of human rights violations exist (known as secondary prevention).

3 See Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, 'From Signals to Action: Strengthening the UN's Conflict Prevention Efforts,' <https://www.geneva-academy.ch/news/detail/767-from-signals-to-action-strengthening-the-un-s-conflict-prevention-efforts> (last accessed 20 October 2025).

4 A. Day and E. Bapt, *From Signals to Action - How the UN Human Rights System Can Deliver Early Warning and Conflict Prevention*, Geneva Academy and United Nations University Centre for Policy Research (UNU- CPR), December 2024, <https://www.geneva-academy.ch/joomlatools-files/docman-files/From%20Signals%20to%20Action.pdf> (last accessed 23 October 2025).

5 Other authors have previously referred to the slippery slope, most notably Rachel Kleinfeld. See R. Kleinfeld, *A Savage Order: How the World's Deadliest Countries Can Forge a Path to Security*, Pantheon Books, 2018.

6 In his 2023 *A New Agenda for Peace*, the UN Secretary-General António Guterres argued that "human rights in their entirety - economic, social and cultural rights as well as civil and political rights" should be "at the heart of national prevention strategies, as human rights are critical to guarantee conditions of inclusion and protect against marginalization and discrimination, thus preventing grievances before they arise." See *A New Agenda for Peace: Our Common Agenda Policy Brief 9*, UN, July 2023, p 19.

7 At the 2025 Meeting of the Global Network of Responsibility to Protect (R2P) Focal Points "some criticized leadership at all levels - national, regional and multilateral - for lacking a clear vision or strategy to confront the rise of authoritarianism, the threats it poses to the post-1945 international order and the exponential increase in abuses perpetrated by these governments against populations." See Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, '11th Meeting of the Global Network of R2P Focal Points Outcome Document,' 11 June 2025, <https://www.globalr2p.org/publications/11th-meeting-of-the-global-network-of-r2p-focal-points-outcome-document> (last accessed 18 October 2025).

8 OHCHR, 'HC Türk updates Human Rights Council: "We need the strongest possible defence of international law and human rights",' 16 June 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2025/06/hc-turk-updates-human-rights-council-we-need-strongest-possible> (last accessed 20 October 2025).

9 This definition aligns with prior UN-commissioned work on authoritarianism, see for example A. Day, D. Druet and L. Quaritsch, *When Dictators Fall: Preventing Violent Conflict during Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, United Nations University Centre for Policy Research, 2019. See also B. Geddes, J. Wright and E. Frantz, *How Dictatorships Work*, Cambridge University Press, 2018, p 20; S. Levitsky and L. Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War*, Cambridge University Press, 2010.

10 See M. W. Svoblik, *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*, Cambridge University Press, 2012.

11 See for example L. Diamond, 'Thinking about hybrid regimes,' *Journal of Democracy* 13(2) (2002): 21- 35; A. Hadenius and J. Teorell, 'Pathways from Authoritarianism,' *Journal of Democracy* 18(1) (2007) 142-157.

12 B. Geddes, 'What do we know about democratization after twenty years?,' *Annual Review of Political Science* 2(1) (1999) 115-144.

13 See for example H. Bartusevičius and S. Skaaning, 'Revisiting democratic civil peace: Electoral regimes and civil conflict,' *Journal of Peace Research* 55(5) (2018) 625-640; M. Howard and P. Roessler, 'Liberalizing electoral outcomes in competitive authoritarian regimes,' *American Journal of Political Science* 50(2) (2006) 365-38. Further arguments have focused on how gender exclusion often serves as a structural enabler of authoritarian control. See M. Juan-Torres, L. Livingston and T. Chandra, *(En)Gendering Authoritarianism*, Democracy & Belonging Forum and Over Zero, 2025, <https://belonging.berkeley.edu/engendering-authoritarianism> (last accessed 15 October 2025).

14 See S. N. Eisenstadt, *Traditional Patrimonialism and Modern Neopatrimonialism*, Sage Publications, 1973; M. Bratton and N. van de Walle, 'Neopatrimonial Regimes and Political Transitions in Africa,' *World Politics* 46 (4) (1994) 453-489; J. Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly*, Polity Press, 2009.

15 For the full list of civil and political rights under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) covers, see UNGA Res 2200A (XXI), 16 December 1966.

16 See S. Levitsky and L. A. Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War*, Cambridge University Press, 2010; A. Meng, 'Ruling Parties in Authoritarian Regimes: Rethinking Institutional Strength,' *British Journal of Political Science* (2019) 1-15.

17 See A. Day, D. Druet and L. Quaritsch, *When Dictators Fall: Preventing Violent Conflict during Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, United Nations University Centre for Policy Research, 2019, p 12.

18 See A. Escriba-Folch and J. Wright, *Foreign Pressure and the Politics of Authoritarian Survival*, Oxford University Press (2015); A. Kendall-Taylor and E. Frantz, 'How autocracies fall,' *The Washington Quarterly* 37(1) (2014) 35-47.

19 C. von Soest, 'Democracy prevention: The international collaboration of authoritarian regimes,' *European Journal of Political Research* 54(4) (2015) 623-638; J. Tolstrup, M. A. Seeberg and J. G. Glavind, 'Signals of Support From Great Power Patrons and the Use of Repression During Nonviolent Protests', *Comparative Political Studies* 52(4) (2018) 514-543.

20 T. Ambrosio, 'Constructing a framework of authoritarian diffusion: Concepts, dynamics, and future research,' *International Studies Perspectives* 11(4) (2010) 375-392.

21 See the Uppsala Conflict Data Program and Peace Research Institute Oslo's definitions of armed conflict: Uppsala University, 'UCDP Definitions,' <https://www.uu.se/en/departement/peace-and-conflict-research/research/ucdp/ucdp-definitions> (last accessed 9 February 2025); A. M. Obermeier and S. A. Rustad, *Conflict Trends: A Global Overview, 1946-2022*, PRIO, 2024, <https://www.prio.org/publications/13513> (last accessed 20 February 2025) p 7. The 2018 UN/World Bank 'Pathways for Peace' report found that violent conflicts have become more complex and protracted, involving more non- state groups and regional and international actors. United Nations and World Bank Group, *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict*, 2018, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/entities/publication/4c36fca6-c7e0-5927-b171-468b0b236b59> (last accessed 9 February 2025).

22 See T. S. Szayna, et.al, *Conflict Trends and Conflict Drivers: An Empirical Assessment of Historical Conflict Patterns and Future Conflict Projections*, RAND Corporation, 2017, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1063.html (last accessed 9 February 2025), p 13.

23 A. Day and E. Bapt, *From Signals to Action - How the UN Human Rights System Can Deliver Early Warning and Conflict Prevention*, Geneva Academy and United Nations University Centre for Policy Research (UNU- CPR), December 2024.

24 United Nations and World Bank Group, *Pathways for Peace*:

Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict, 2018, p 155.
25 Ibid.

26 B. Bueno de Mesquita, A. Smith, R. M. Diversion and J. D. Morrow, *The Logic of Political Survival*, MIT Press, 2003; C. Davenport, *State Repression and the Domestic Democratic Peace*, Cambridge University Press, 2007.

27 Y. Gorokhovskaia and C. Grothe, *Freedom in The World 2025: The Uphill Battle to Safeguard Rights*, Freedom House, 2025, https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2025-03/FITW_World2025digitalN.pdf (last accessed 10 October 2025).

28 Ibid, p 2; 8.. All countries designated as 'Not Free' by Freedom House in 2024 recorded a net loss in conditions for political rights and civil liberties, except for Syria which saw an improvement (+4) for these particular rights. In the latter case, the correlation is harder to establish given significant changes in Syria's governance over the course of 2024.

29 Y. Gorokhovskaia and C. Grothe, *Freedom in The World 2025: The Uphill Battle to Safeguard Rights*, Freedom House, 2025, p 2.

30 See for example S. Levitsky and L. Way, *Revolution and Dictatorship: The Violent Origins of Durable Authoritarianism*, Princeton University Press, 2022.

31 See E. Hamlet and A. Vincze, 'Managing Courts in Competitive Authoritarian Regimes,' *Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft*, (18:3) (2024) 381-400; Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, *Media Freedom, Democracy, and Security*, 15 July 2024, <https://www.osce.org/representative-on-freedom-of-media/572878> (last accessed 9 October 2025).

32 OHCHR, 'Electoral year 2024: UN experts call for strengthening democracy and reversing global erosion of human rights,' 30 April 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/04/electoral-year-2024-un-experts-call-strengthening-democracy-and-reversing> (last accessed 19 October 2025).

33 See for example Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2023: Events of 2022*, 2023, https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media_2023/01/World_Report_2023_WEBSPREADS_0.pdf (last accessed 10 October 2025), p 1.

34 See for example A. V. Panaro and A. Vaccaro, 'Income Inequality in Authoritarian Regimes: The Role of Political Institutions and State Capacity,' *Italian Political Science Review* (53:2) (2023) 161-178; M. Evans, 'Structural Violence, Socioeconomic Rights, and Transformative Justice,' *Journal of Human Rights* (15:1) (2016) 1-20.

35 Similar calls have been made with regards to peacebuilding. See for example Erica Gaston, Raphael Bodewig, Fiona Mangan and Emma Bapt, *Economic, social and cultural rights in peacebuilding*, United Nations University Centre for Policy Research, February 2025, https://collections.unu.edu/eserv/UNU:9658/economic_social_cultural_rights_peacebuilding_.pdf (last accessed 21 October 2025).

36 S. Feldstein, *The Rise of Digital Repression: How Technology Is Reshaping Power, Politics, and Resistance*, Oxford University Press, 2021; A. Nafeez, 'How AI and Big Data Empower Authoritarian Governments,' *Journal of Global Security Studies* (6:3) (2021) 357-372; J. Brownlee, 'The Revival of Authoritarianism in the Digital Age,' *Democratization* (28:1) (2021) 180-200.

37 R. Kleinfeld, *A Savage Order: How the World's Deadliest Countries Can Forge a Path to Security*, Pantheon Books, 2018, Introduction.

38 A New Agenda for Peace: Our Common Agenda Policy Brief 9, UN , July 2023, p 19.

39 Other factors preceding violent conflict exist. This working paper does not imply that these factors necessarily lead to violent conflict, but rather that the combination of some or all of these factors increase the risks of human rights violations, which often are an early warning sign of conflict.

40 See Transparency International's work on corruption and authoritarianism: <https://knowledgehub.transparency.org/helpdesk/the-connections-between-corruption-autocracy-and-human-rights-in-latin-america> "The relationship between

corruption, autocracy and human rights can become a vicious circle, in which the deterioration of meaningful democracy allows corruption to go unchecked, which in turn facilitates human rights abuses that further cement authoritarian modes of governance."; <https://www.transparency.org/en/press/2024-corruption-perceptions-index-authoritarianism-and-weakening-democracy-undermine-action-against-corruption-in-eastern-europe-and-central-asia>; <https://www.transparency.org/en/news/cpi-2021-corruption-human-rights-democracy>.

41 Note: The 'From Signals to Action' report included a fifth case study (the 2014 Russo-Ukrainian war), however it was excluded from this paper's analysis given that this case involved a conflict between two states (Russia and Ukraine), and therefore would require a more complex explanation of the dynamics between violations of political, civil and legal rights and economic, social and cultural rights in each state preceding the conflict in 2014. Nonetheless, to highlight the negative correlation between a country's freedom status and the enjoyment of political, civil and legal rights, both Ukraine and Russia were included in ANNEX 1: Table 1.0: Freedom Status Ranking up to Five Years Preceding Conflict Outbreak.

42 A. Day and E. Bapt, *From Signals to Action - How the UN Human Rights System Can Deliver Early Warning and Conflict Prevention*, Geneva Academy and United Nations University Centre for Policy Research (UNU- CPR), December 2024, <https://www.geneva-academy.ch/joomlatools-files/docman-files/From%20Signals%20to%20Action.pdf> (last accessed 23 October 2025), pp 31-35.

43 See ANNEX 1: Table 1.0: Freedom Status Ranking up to Five Years Preceding Conflict Outbreak.

44 A. Day and E. Bapt, *From Signals to Action - How the UN Human Rights System Can Deliver Early Warning and Conflict Prevention*, Geneva Academy and United Nations University Centre for Policy Research (UNU- CPR), December 2024, <https://www.geneva-academy.ch/joomlatools-files/docman-files/From%20Signals%20to%20Action.pdf> (last accessed 23 October 2025), pp.10; 20.

45 See for example OHCHR, 'Statement of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar by Tomás Ojea Quintana, 16 February 2013, Yangon International Airport, Myanmar,' 18 February 2013, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2013/02/statement-special-rapporteur-situation-human-rights-myanmar-tomas-ojea-quintana> (last accessed 15 October 2025).

46 A. Day and E. Bapt, *From Signals to Action - How the UN Human Rights System Can Deliver Early Warning and Conflict Prevention*, p 10.

47 Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Summary of stakeholders' submissions on Nicaragua, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/47/NIC/3, 2 September 2024, §22. As of the time of writing, this law has resulted in the arrest and ban of seven opposition presidential candidates and the cancellation of the main indigenous party in 2023.

48 Compilation of information prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/47/NIC/2, 23 August 2024, §66. This practice and its consequences for Nicaraguans abroad continue to this day. See for example G. Belli, 'I Was Banished by My Country's Dictator. What Happened to Me Is a Warning.' *New York Times*, 4 August 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/08/04/opinion/nicaragua-ortega-dictatorship-exile.html> (last accessed 22 October 2025).

49 Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Summary of stakeholders' submissions on Nicaragua, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/47/NIC/3, 2 September 2024, §11.

50 See for example Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation of human rights in Nicaragua, UN doc A/HRC/49/23, 24 February 2022, §57; Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the human rights situation in Nicaragua, UN doc A/HRC/57/20, 2 September 2024, §45. In the latter report, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights made direct reference to the politically motivated nature of discrimination in Nicaragua.

51 The HRC-mandated Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua has investigated alleged human rights violations and abuses committed in Nicaragua since April 2018. Its mandate was recently renewed in April 2025 under UN HRC Res 58/18, 16 April 2025. Since its establishment, the Group of Human Rights Experts has published the following three reports: A/HRC/58/26 (2025); A/HRC/55/27 (2024); A/HRC/52/63 (2023). See United Nations Human Rights Council, 'Group

of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua,' <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/ghre-nicaragua/index> (last accessed 23 October 2025).

52 Report of the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua, UN doc A/HRC/52/63, 24 November 2023, §53. The extended version of this report (available in Spanish) includes a detailed analysis of a series of laws used "to criminalize the exercise of fundamental freedoms and to criminally prosecute real or perceived opponents." See Conclusiones detalladas del Grupo de Expertos en Derechos Humanos sobre Nicaragua, UN doc, A/HRC/52/CRP.5, 7 March 2023, §532.

53 Report of the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua, UN doc A/HRC/52/63, 24 November 2023, §93.

54 Ibid, §110.

55 These include, for example, Law No. 3713, Law No. 7262 and the relevant articles of the Criminal Code in Turkey.

56 Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression on his mission to Turkey, UN doc A/HRC/35/22/Add.3, 21 June 2017, §17.

57 For example, the Committee highlighted "that article 314 of the Penal Code and article 7 of the Anti-Terror Act relating to leaders and members of armed organizations are applied to convict women human rights defenders and sentence them to lengthy prison sentences." Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Concluding observations on the eighth periodic report of Türkiye, UN doc CEDAW/C/TUR/CO/8, 12 July 2022, §39.

58 See for example OHCHR, 'Turkey: Stop mis-using the law to detain human rights defenders, urges UN expert,' 9 June 2021, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2021/06/turkey-stop-mis-using-law-detain-human-rights-defenders-urges-un-expert> (last accessed 20 October 2025); OHCHR, 'Türkiye: Expert dismayed by continued misuse of counter terrorism law to keep human rights defenders in long-term detention,' 16 January 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/01/turkiye-expert-dismayed-continued-misuse-counter-terrorism-law-keep-human> (last accessed 19 October 2025).

59 Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Summary of Stakeholders' submissions on Turkey, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/35/TUR/3, 12 November 2019, §66.

60 Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Compilation on Hungary, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/39/HUN/2, 25 August 2021, §18.

61 Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review on Hungary, UN doc A/HRC/49/8, 21 December 2021. See for example recommendations 128.25; 128.49; 128.50.

62 OHCHR, 'Concern at Hungary's new anti-LGBTIQ+ law, 21 March 2025 Comment by UN Human Rights spokesperson Liz Throssell on Hungary's new anti-LGBTIQ+ law,' 21 March 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/03/concern-hungarys-new-anti-lgbtq-law> (last accessed 14 October 2025).

63 Human Rights Committee Concluding observations on the sixth periodic report of Hungary, UN doc CCPR/C/HUN/CO/6, 9 May 2018, §55. Hungary passed the 'Stop-Soros' laws in June 2018, and remained in place as of the time of research. See The Guardian, 'Hungary passes anti-immigrant 'Stop Soros' laws,' 20 June 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jun/20/hungary-passes-anti-immigrant-stop-soros-laws> (last accessed 19 October 2025).

64 Compilation prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with paragraph 15 (b) of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Council resolution 16/21, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/24/MOZ/2, 23 November 2015, §6; 35; 58. See also Committee on the Rights of the Child Concluding observations on the combined third and fourth periodic reports of Mozambique, UN doc CRC/C/MOZ/CO/3-4, 27 November 2019, §16.

65 J. Schweppe, 'What is a hate crime?,' *Cogent Social Sciences*, (7:1) (2021).

66 Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, 'Collecting data to

address hate crime,' <https://hatecrime.osce.org/> (last accessed 22 October 2025).

67 See for example Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, *Understanding Hate Crimes: A Handbook for Ukraine*, 2015, <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/4/9/208176.pdf> (last accessed 19 October 2025).

68 See Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination Concluding observations on the combined eighteenth to twenty-fifth periodic reports of Hungary, UN doc CERD/C/HUN/CO/18-25, 6 June 2019, §14(a); Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Compilation on Hungary, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/39/HUN/2, 25 August 2021, §10.

69 Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review on Hungary, UN doc A/HRC/49/8, 21 December 2021, §128.53.

70 Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Summary of Stakeholders' submissions on Hungary, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/39/HUN/3, 25 August 2021, §21.

71 Compilation prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with paragraph 15 (b) of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Council resolution 16/21 on Mozambique, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/24/MOZ/2, 23 November 2015, §24.

72 Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, on Compilation on Turkey, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/35/TUR/2, 12 November 2019, §10.

73 National report submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1 and 16/21 on Türkiye, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/49/TUR/1, 10 February 2025, §43.

74 Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Concluding observations on the eighth periodic report of Türkiye, UN doc CEDAW/C/TUR/CO/8, 12 July 2022, §30.

75 Compilation of information prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Nicaragua, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/47/NIC/2, 23 August 2024, §25.

76 A. Day and E. Bapt, *From Signals to Action - How the UN Human Rights System Can Deliver Early Warning and Conflict Prevention*, p 22.

77 Between 2013 and 2017, the research team found at least 25 mentions of instances of hate speech and/or propaganda. See A. Day and E. Bapt, *From Signals to Action - How the UN Human Rights System Can Deliver Early Warning and Conflict Prevention*, p 22.

78 OHCHR, 'Criminalisation of Istanbul Bar Association and dismissal of executive board, a chilling attack on the independence of lawyers: UN experts,' 30 May 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/05/criminalisation-istanbul-bar-association-and-dismissal-executive-board> (last accessed 12 October 2025).

79 Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences Reem Alsalem visit to Türkiye, UN doc A/HRC/53/36/Add.1, 1 June 2023, §48.

80 See Compilation of information prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Türkiye, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/49/TUR/2, 4 February 2025, §19; 108; Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Summary of stakeholders' submissions on Türkiye, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/49/TUR/3, 22 January 2025, §5. During Turkey's previous UPR cycle in 2019, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination had brought attention to reported cases of "racist hate speech and discriminatory statements in public discourse, including in the media, directed mainly at minorities." See Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Compilation on Turkey, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/35/TUR/2, 12 November 2019, §10.

81 Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Compilation on Hungary, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/39/HUN/2, 25 August 2021, §9. Similarly, in 2019, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination argued that racist hate speech in the State party "fuels hatred and intolerance and at times incites violence towards such groups." See Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination Concluding observations on the combined eighteenth to twenty-fifth periodic reports of Hungary, UN doc CERD/C/HUN/CO/18-25, 6 June 2019, §16.

82 Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review on Hungary, UN doc A/HRC/33/9, 8 July 2016, §128.99; 128.103; 128.112.

83 See Compilation prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with paragraph 15 (b) of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Council resolution 16/21 on Hungary, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/25/HUN/2, 7 March 2016, §16; 17.

84 Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Situation of human rights in Nicaragua, UN doc A/HRC/49/23, 24 February 2022, §16.

85 Report of the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua, UN doc A/HRC/52/63, 24 November 2023, §97; Report of the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua, UN doc A/HRC/55/27, 15 March 2024, §66.

86 Report of the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua, UN doc A/HRC/52/63, 24 November 2023, §98.

87 Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Compilation on Turkey, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/35/TUR/2, 12 November 2019, §

88 OHCHR, 'Turkey: UN report details extensive human rights violations during protracted state of emergency,' 20 March 2018, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2018/03/turkey-un-report-details-extensive-human-rights-violations-during-protracted?LangID=R&NewsID=22853> (last accessed 19 October 2025).

89 Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Compilation on Turkey, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/35/TUR/2, 12 November 2019, §25.

90 See OHCHR, 'Turkey must ensure fair appeal for Judge Murat Arslan after gross attack on judicial independence, says UN expert,' 6 February 2019, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2019/02/turkey-must-ensure-fair-appeal-judge-murat-arslan-after-gross-attack?LangID=E&NewsID=24140> (last accessed 21 October 2025); OHCHR, 'Turkey: Stop mis-using the law to detain human rights defenders, urges UN expert,' 9 June 2021, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2021/06/turkey-stop-mis-using-law-detain-human-rights-defenders-urges-un-expert> (last accessed 21 October 2025).

91 Compilation of information prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Türkiye, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/49/TUR/2, 4 February 2025, §51.

92 Ibid, §101; 108; 110. Two years prior, in 2023, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences had brought attention to "widespread online and offline violence" of women in politics, "cutting across party and other lines," as well as women human rights defenders and Kurds, including women. See Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences, Reem Alsalem on Visit to Türkiye, UN doc A/HRC/53/36/Add.1, 1 June 2023, §19; 32. See also Committee on the Rights of the Child Concluding observations on the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Türkiye, UN doc CRC/C/TUR/CO/4-5, 21 June 2023, §28.

93 The summary of stakeholders' submissions on Türkiye for its 2025 UPR stated that 'Türkiye had placed dissidents living abroad on its public "Wanted for Terrorism" lists, which represented a form of transnational repression aimed at intimidating and silencing Government critics.' See Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Summary of stakeholders' submissions on Türkiye, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/49/TUR/3, 22 January 2025, §44.

94 Human Rights Watch, 'Nicaragua: Events of 2024,' <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2025/country-chapters/nicaragua> (last accessed 22 October 2025).

95 See Report of the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua, UN doc A/HRC/55/27, 15 March 2024.

96 Compilation of information prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Nicaragua, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/47/NIC/2, 23 August 2024, §55. One year later, in 2024, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights' report underscored the "prevalence of direct violence against Indigenous Peoples but also the lack of exercise of due diligence by the authorities to protect their rights." See Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

on the Human rights situation in Nicaragua, UN doc A/HRC/57/20, 2 September 2024, §70.

97 OHCHR, 'Nicaragua's grim reality: Investigation by UN experts reveals crimes against humanity targeting civilians, including children and students, for political ends,' 29 February 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/02/nicaraguas-grim-reality-investigation-un-experts-reveals-crimes-against> (last accessed 17 October 2025).

98 See for example OHCHR, 'Mozambique: UN Human Rights Chief urges de-escalation of post-election tensions,' 6 November 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/11/mozambique-un-human-rights-chief-urges-de-escalation-post-election-tensions> (last accessed 16 October 2025); OHCHR, 'Mozambique: Post-election violence and repression must stop, say UN experts,' 15 November 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/11/mozambique-post-election-violence-and-repression-must-stop-say-un-experts> (last accessed 16 October 2025).

99 Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Compilation on Mozambique, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/38/MOZ/2, 12 February 2021, §60. See also Compilation prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with paragraph 15 (b) of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Council resolution 16/21 on Mozambique, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/24/MOZ/2, 23 November 2025, §26.

100 See for example Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Compilation on Hungary, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/39/HUN/2, 25 August 2021, §22; 32.

101 A. Day and E. Bapt, *From Signals to Action - How the UN Human Rights System Can Deliver Early Warning and Conflict Prevention*, p 5-8. As outlined in the report, ten Special Procedures mandate holders denounced the brutal crackdown in Syria on peaceful protesters, journalists and HRDs in a joint statement in April 2011. The 2011 report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria also highlighted the 'widespread harassment of human rights defenders and journalists' amid an ongoing government crackdown on peaceful protesters and shrinking civic space.

102 R. Kleinfeld, *A Savage Order: How the World's Deadliest Countries Can Forge a Path to Security*, Pantheon Books, 2018, p 144.

103 Ibid, p 145.

104 A. Day and E. Bapt, *From Signals to Action - How the UN Human Rights System Can Deliver Early Warning and Conflict Prevention*, p 31.

105 Instances of police and/or security force brutality against peaceful protestors were mentioned at least 141 in 2011, while arbitrary detention and arrests appeared 136 in 2011. The large-scale and widespread use of arbitrary arrests and detention by members of the security and/or military forces was often found to be accompanied by torture and ill-treatment. For more detail see A. Day and E. Bapt, *From Signals to Action - How the UN Human Rights System Can Deliver Early Warning and Conflict Prevention*, p 6.

106 Compilation of information prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, on Nicaragua, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/47/NIC/2, 23 August 2024, §13.

107 Report of the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua, UN doc A/HRC/52/63, 24 November 2023, §37. In August 2018, only a few months following the beginning of the protests in Nicaragua, a group of UN Special Rapporteurs and Working Groups highlighted expanding "patterns of repression of dissent" that are "indicative of a policy implemented by the authorities to eradicate the structural conditions which support opposition voices and critics." See OHCHR, 'Nicaragua must end 'witch-hunt' against dissenting voices, say UN experts,' 09 August 2018,

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2018/08/nicaragua-must-end-witch-hunt-against-dissenting-voices-say-un-experts> (last accessed 14 October 2025).

108 Report of the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua, UN doc A/HRC/52/63, 24 November 2023, §52.

109 See for example the Syrian diaspora in the United States N. Almasalkhi,

'Internalized political repression: Legacies of authoritarianism in the U.S.-based Syrian diaspora during the Arab Spring,' *Sociological Forum* (39:1) (2024) 79-93.

110 Report of the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua, UN doc A/HRC/58/26, 24 February 2025, §12.

111 See UN Web TV, '20th Meeting - 59th Session of Human Rights Council,' 27 June 2025, <https://webtv.un.org/en/asset/k1l/k1leq0nf3g> (last accessed 23 October 2025).

112 Report of the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua, UN doc A/HRC/55/27, 15 March 2024, §63.

113 Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Compilation on Turkey, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/35/TUR/2, 12 November 2019, §18.

114 Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Summary of Stakeholders' submissions on Türkiye, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/49/TUR/3, 22 January 2025, §42.

115 Ibid. Turkey's state of emergency decrees have applied not only to offences related to the 2016 failed coup but all terrorist offences, including those in the context of the violence in the south-east of Turkey. Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Summary of Stakeholders' submissions on Türkiye, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/49/TUR/3, 22 January 2025, §29.

116 Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Summary of Stakeholders' submissions on Turkey, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/35/TUR/3, 12 November 2019, §24.

117 Report of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment on his mission to Turkey, UN doc A/HRC/37/50/Add.1, 18 December 2017, §101. See also OHCHR, 'Turkey: UN report details extensive human rights violations during protracted state of emergency,' 20 March 2018, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2018/03/turkey-un-report-details-extensive-human-rights-violations-during-protracted> (last accessed 19 October 2025).

118 Compilation of information prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Türkiye, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/49/TUR/2, 4 February 2025, §57.

119 Compilation prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with paragraph 15 (b) of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Council resolution 16/21 on Mozambique, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/24/MOZ/2, 23 November 2015, §18.

120 Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Compilation on Mozambique, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/38/MOZ/2, 12 February 2021, §20.

121 OHCHR, 'Mozambique: UN Human Rights Chief urges de-escalation of post-election tensions,' 6 November 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/11/mozambique-un-human-rights-chief-urges-de-escalation-post-election-tensions> (last accessed 20 October 2025); OHCHR, 'Mozambique: Post-election violence and repression must stop, say UN experts,' 15 November 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/11/mozambique-post-election-violence-and-repression-must-stop-say-un-experts> (last accessed 20 October 2025).

122 See A. Day and E. Bapt, *From Signals to Action - How the UN Human Rights System Can Deliver Early Warning and Conflict Prevention*, p 23-24.

123 Ibid, p 11.

124 For example, the authors found at least 69 mentions of issues of access to justice and the rule of law across the UN's human rights reporting in Ukraine between 2010-2014; 66 in Myanmar between 2013-2017; 28 in South Sudan (2009-2013); 24 in Mali (2008-2012); and 18 in Syria (2007-2011). For more detail see the case studies from A. Day and E. Bapt, *From Signals to Action - How the UN Human Rights System Can Deliver Early Warning and Conflict Prevention*.

125 See UN HRC Res 59/L.6, 30 June 2025.

126 Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Summary of Stakeholders' submissions on Hungary, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/39/HUN/3, 25 August 2021, §27.

127 Ibid, §10.

128 Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Concluding observations on the ninth periodic report of Hungary, UN doc CEDAW/C/HUN/CO/9, 2 March 2023, §3.

129 See Compilation prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with paragraph 15 (b) of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Council resolution 16/21 on Mozambique, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/24/MOZ/2, 23 November 2015, §31; Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review on Mozambique, UN doc A/HRC/48/6, 25 June 2021, §149.92.

130 Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Summary of Stakeholders' submissions on Mozambique, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/38/MOZ/3, 22 February 2021, §74.

131 OHCHR, 'Act now to end violence, Zeid urges Nicaraguan authorities,' 5 July 2018,

[https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2018/07/act-now-end-violence-zeid-urges-nicaraguan-authorities#:~:text=GENEVA%20\(5%20July%202018\)%20%E2%80%93UN%20High%20Commissioner%20for%20Human](https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2018/07/act-now-end-violence-zeid-urges-nicaraguan-authorities#:~:text=GENEVA%20(5%20July%202018)%20%E2%80%93UN%20High%20Commissioner%20for%20Human) (last accessed 24 October 2025).

132 Compilation of information prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/47/NIC/2, 23 August 2024, §20; 21.

133 For all reports of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Nicaragua from 2019 to 2024, see OHCHR, 'Documents Listing,' https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents-listing?field_geolocation_target_id%5B1075%5D=1075&field_content_category_target_id%5B180%5D=180&field_content_category_target_id%5B182%5D=182&field_entity_target_id%5B1349%5D=1349&field_entity_target_id%5B1350%5D=1350&view_mode=document-list&sort_bef_combine=field_published_date_value_DESC (last accessed 16 October 2025).

134 Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Human rights situation in Nicaragua, UN doc A/HRC/54/60, 10 August 2023, §22.

135 Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Human rights situation in Nicaragua, UN doc A/HRC/57/20, 2 September 2024, §39.

136 Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination Concluding observations on the combined fifteenth to twenty-first periodic reports of Nicaragua, UN doc CERD/C/NIC/CO/15-21, 22 December 2023 §28; Compilation of information prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/47/NIC/2, 23 August 2024, §58.

137 OHCHR, 'Nicaragua's deepening repression: UN experts call for urgent global action,' 26 February 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/02/nicaraguas-deepening-repression-un-experts-call-urgent-global-action> (last accessed 3 October 2025).

138 Ibid.

139 Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Summary of stakeholders' submissions on Türkiye, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/49/TUR/3, 22 January 2025, §49.

140 OHCHR, 'Turkey must ensure fair appeal for Judge Murat Arslan after gross attack on judicial independence, says UN expert,' 6 February 2019, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2019/02/turkey-must-ensure-fair-appeal-judge-murat-arslan-after-gross-attack?LangID=E&NewsID=24140> (last accessed 20 October 2025).

141 Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression on his mission to Turkey, UN doc A/HRC/35/22/Add.3, 21 June 2017, §69.

142 G. Camacho, *The connections between corruption, autocracy and human rights in Latin America*, Transparency International, January 2022, <https://knowledgehub.transparency.org/helpdesk/the-connections-between-corruption-autocracy-and-human-rights-in-latin-america> (last accessed 9 October 2025), p 4. See also Transparency International's previous and ongoing work on corruption and authoritarianism: Transparency International, '2024 Corruption Perceptions Index: Authoritarianism and Weakening Democracy Undermine Action Against Corruption in Eastern Europe and Central Asia,' 11 February 2025, <https://www.transparency.org/en/press/2024-corruption-perceptions-index-authoritarianism-and-weakening-democracy-undermine-action-against-corruption-in-eastern-europe-and-central-asia> (last accessed 27 October 2025); J. Vrushni and R. M. B. Kukutschka, 'CPI 2021: Corruption, Human Rights and Democracy,' Transparency International, 25 January 2022, <https://www.transparency.org/en/news/cpi-2021-corruption-human-rights-democracy> (last accessed 27 October 2025).

143 Previous research has examined how corruption, notably in the defence and security sectors, undermines conflict prevention, peacebuilding and peacekeeping efforts, including by driving human rights abuses and enabling impunity. See for example: S. White, Y. Kang Choo, D. Zhelyazkova, P. Brobbey, *Sabotaging Peace: Corruption as a Threat to International Peace and Security*, Transparency International, June 2025, <https://ti-defence.org/publications/sabotaging-peace-corruption-as-a-threat-to-international-peace-and-security/> (last accessed 9 October 2025).

144 G. Camacho, *The connections between corruption, autocracy and human rights in Latin America*, p 4.

145 UN HRC Res 59/L.6, 30 June 2025. HRC Resolution 59/13 on the impact of arms transfers on human rights is equally relevant in that it addresses the role of promoting transparency and combating corruption in preventing, mitigating and addressing the negative human rights impacts of the diversion of arms and unregulated or illicit arms transfers. See UN HRC Res 59/13, 17 July 2025, §3.

146 UN HRC Res 59/L.6, 30 June 2025.

147 Ibid.

148 A. Day and E. Bapt, *From Signals to Action - How the UN Human Rights System Can Deliver Early Warning and Conflict Prevention*, p 34.

149 For example, recent HRC Resolution 59/L.6 observed that corruption "frequently results in discriminatory access to public services and goods, and renders those in vulnerable situations more prone to adversely suffering from the negative social and environmental impact of economic activities." See UN HRC Res 59/L.6, 30 June 2025. Within authoritarian settings, political leaders often turn to corruption to secure resources and/or access to resources, including private goods.

150 In the case of Myanmar, there were 16 mentions of corruption between 2013 and 2017, primarily highlighting allegations of corruption within the judiciary, and in connection with allegations of trafficking. Similarly, in Mali between 2008 and 2012, the authors found 13 mentions noting the persistence of corruption, including in the judiciary. See for example Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Tomás Ojea Quintana, UN doc A/HRC/25/64, 2 April 2014, §85(f); National report submitted in accordance with Paragraph 15 (A) of the Annex to the Human Rights Council Resolution 5/1 on Mali, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/2/MLI/1, 14 April 2008, §118.

151 UN News, 'UN human rights experts urge Syria to end crackdown and carry out reforms,' 15 April 2011, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2011/04/372472> (last accessed 27 October 2025).

152 Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Nicaragua, UN doc E/C.12/NIC/CO/5, 11 November 2021, §13.

153 Ibid, §14.

154 Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Situation of human rights in Nicaragua, UN doc A/HRC/49/23, 24 February 2022, §57.

155 Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Summary of stakeholders' submissions on Türkiye, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/49/TUR/3, 22 January 2025, §47.

156 Compilation prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with paragraph 15 (b) of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Council resolution 16/21 on Mozambique, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/24/MOZ/2, 23 November 2015, §37.

157 National report submitted in accordance with paragraph 5 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21 on Mozambique, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/24/MOZ/1, 9 December 2015, §44. See also Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Human rights on Summary of Stakeholders' submissions on Mozambique, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/38/MOZ/3, 22 February 2021, §48.

158 Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders on his mission to Hungary, UN doc A/HRC/34/52/Add.2, 19 January 2017, §87.

159 United Nations and World Bank Group, *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict*, 2018, p 155.

160 A. Day and E. Bapt, *From Signals to Action - How the UN Human Rights System Can Deliver Early Warning and Conflict Prevention*, p 24.

161 Ibid, p 14.

162 Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Human rights situation in Nicaragua, UN doc A/HRC/54/60, 10 August 2023, §61. Earlier in 2021, the UN High Commissioner highlighted that the loss of land of indigenous and Afro-descendent communities posed "serious challenges to guaranteeing the enjoyment of the rights to housing, adequate food, health and education, among others." See Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Situation of human rights in Nicaragua, UN doc A/HRC/46/21, 11 February 2021, §64.

163 Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Human rights situation in Nicaragua, UN doc A/HRC/54/60, 10 August 2023, §61.

164 Report of the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua, UN doc A/HRC/55/27, 15 March 2024, §63.

165 Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination Concluding observations on the combined fifteenth to twenty-first periodic reports of Nicaragua, UN doc CERD/C/NIC/CO/15-21, 22 December 2023, §18.

166 Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Human rights situation in Nicaragua, UN doc A/HRC/57/20, 2 September 2024, §63.

167 Compilation prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with paragraph 15 (b) of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Council resolution 16/21 on Hungary, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/25/HUN/2, 7 March 2016, §47; Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Compilation on Hungary, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/39/HUN/2, 25 August 2021, §30.

168 OHCHR, 'UN expert warns of hollowing out of Hungarian public education system, deepening inequalities,' 21 March 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/03/un-expert-warns-hollowing-out-hungarian-public-education-system-deepening> (last accessed 19 October 2025).

169 This includes the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. See for example Compilation of information prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Türkiye, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/49/TUR/2, 4 February 2025, §85; 91; Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Concluding observations on the initial report of Turkey, UN doc CRPD/C/TUR/CO/1, 1 October 2019, §48; Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families Concluding observations on the second periodic report of Türkiye, UN doc CMW/C/TUR/CO/2, 11 July 2024, §47.

170 Compilation of information prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, on Türkiye, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/49/TUR/2, 4 February 2025, §94.

171 Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Paula Gaviria Betancur, on Visit to Mozambique, UN doc A/HRC/56/47/Add.1, 3 July 2024, §18; Compilation prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with paragraph 15 (b) of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Council resolution 16/21 on Mozambique, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/24/MOZ/2, 23 November 2015, §51.

172 United Nations and World Bank Group, *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict*, 2018, p 155.

173 Institute for Economics & Peace, *Global Peace Index 2025: Identifying and Measuring the Factors that Drive Peace*, June 2025, <http://visionofhumanity.org/resources> (last accessed 27 October 2025), p 93. The 'freedom of the press' indicator used for the Global Peace Index is based on an index of measures that include media independence, concentration of media, journalist safety and the quality of news infrastructure.

174 Ibid.

175 On 30 June 2025 during the HRC's 59th session, an HRC Side Event entitled "Democratic Backsliding and Freedom of Expression," organized by International Network for Human Rights (INHR), discussed the connections between democratic backsliding and freedom of expression in Hungary, Slovakia, and the EU more broadly. See United Nations Human Rights Council, 'Side Event - Democratic Backsliding and Freedom of Expression,' 30 June 2025, <https://hrc59session.sched.com/event/26BWf/side-event-democratic-backsliding-and-freedom-of-expression> (last accessed 27 October 2025).

176 A. Day and E. Bapt, *From Signals to Action - How the UN Human Rights System Can Deliver Early Warning and Conflict Prevention*, p 34.

177 Ibid, for more detail see individual case studies.

178 Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Summary of Stakeholders' submissions on Turkey, A/HRC/WG.6/35/TUR/3, 12 November 2019, §34. In 2017, the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression highlighted in his report that "on the basis of emergency decrees, over 100 media outlets were reportedly closed during the first six weeks of the state of emergency." See Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression on his mission to Turkey, UN doc A/HRC/35/22/Add.3, 21 June 2017, §31.

179 See for example Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression on his mission to Turkey, UN doc A/HRC/35/22/Add.3, 21 June 2017, §20.

180 Compilation of information prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, on Türkiye, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/49/TUR/2, 4 February 2025, §54.

181 In his 2017 report following a mission to Hungary, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders argued that "this concentration of media in the hands of the Government has reduced access to the media by human rights defenders and civil society organizations". See Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders on his mission to Hungary, UN doc A/HRC/34/52/Add.2, 19 January 2017, §97.

182 OHCHR, 'Hungary / Freedom of expression: UN expert still concerned despite moves on controversial media legislation,' 5 April 2011, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2011/04/hungary-freedom-expression-un-expert-still-concerned-despite-moves?LangID=E&NewsID=10916> (last accessed 27 October 2025); Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review on Hungary, UN doc A/HRC/33/9, 8 July 2016, §128.160.

183 Summary prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with paragraph 15 (c) of the annex to Human Rights

Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Council resolution 16/21 on Mozambique, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/24/MOZ/3, 13 November 2015, §35.

184 Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Compilation on Mozambique, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/38/MOZ/2, 12 February 2021, §31.

185 OHCHR, 'Mozambique: Post-election violence and repression must stop, say UN experts,' 15 November 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/11/mozambique-post-election-violence-and-repression-must-stop-say-un-experts> (last accessed 27 October 2025).

186 See Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Situation of human rights in Nicaragua, UN doc A/HRC/46/21, 11 February 2021, §22; Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Nicaragua, UN doc E/C.12/NIC/CO/5, 11 November 2021, §49; Report of the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua, UN doc A/HRC/52/63, 24 November 2023, §39.

187 Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Summary of Stakeholders' submissions on Turkey, UN doc A/HRC/WG.6/35/TUR/3, 12 November 2019, §52. The Emergency Decree Law no. 675 has also been used to dismiss academics from university appointments, assumed to be connected with the 'Gülenist movement' or the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). See Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression on his mission to Turkey, UN doc A/HRC/35/22/Add.3, 21 June 2017, §56.

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