



CIUDADANÍA Y VALORES
FUNDACIÓN



OIDEL

Human Rights Observatory

(05/2025 - 07/2025)

Trimestral review on the state of situation of human rights discussions in international organizations, with a special focus on the right to education, freedom of religion, family rights

Introduction

The Human Rights Observatory (HRO) is a trimestral monitoring initiative led by FUNCIVA and OIDEL, aimed at providing a comprehensive and structured overview of the latest developments in international human rights discussions, with a particular focus on the right to education, freedom of religion or belief, and family rights. This Observatory seeks to offer stakeholders—governments, civil society organizations, researchers, and educators—an accessible and timely synthesis of key resolutions, reports, and policy trends emerging from international organizations such as the United Nations, UNESCO, OECD, Council of Europe, and the European Union. Its aim is to enable timely responses and ensure that all stakeholders are meaningfully involved in shaping decisions—thus contributing to more equitable and democratic outcomes. Covering the period from May to July 2025,

this edition provides an analytical snapshot of recent developments, highlighting both challenges and opportunities for advancing a human rights framework that respects pluralism, protects dignity, and fosters social cohesion.

This report stands as a clear expression of the commitment of FUNCIVA and OIDEL to the promotion and defense of human rights. It also reflects their shared mission to bring the work of international organizations closer to the field—bridging the gap between global decision-making and local realities. By doing so, both institutions reaffirm their dedication to fostering informed civic participation and ensuring that international human rights processes remain open, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of all communities

Content

1. Summary report

2. Right to Education

2.a United Nations

2.a.i Human Rights Council

2.a.i.i Resolutions

2.a.i.ii Thematic Reports

2.a.i.iii Universal Periodic Review

2.a.iv Intersessional Activities

2.a.ii UNESCO

2.a.ii.i Policy Papers

2.a.ii.ii Upcoming

2.b Others

2.b.i OECD

2.b.ii Council of Europe

2.b.iii European Union

2.b.iv OEI

2.b.v Global Developments on the Right to Education

3. Freedom of religion

3.a United Nations

3.a.i Human Rights Council

3.a.i.i Resolutions

3.a.i.ii Thematic Reports

3.a.i.iii Universal Periodic Review

3.b Others

3.b.i European Union

3.b.ii Global Developments on the Rights to Freedom of religion

4. Family Rights

4.a United Nations

4.a.i Human Rights Council

4.a.i.i Resolutions

4.a.i.ii Thematic Reports

4.a.i.iii Universal Periodic Review

4.b Others

4.b.i Council of Europe

4.b.ii European Union

4.b.iii Global Developments on Family Rights

1. Report Summary

This report covers the period from May to July 2025, analyzing key developments in the right to education, freedom of religion, and family rights, drawing from recent reports and resolutions from the United Nations (UN), the Council of Europe, the OECD, and the European Union. The international context for this period has remained complex, and the conflict in Gaza, in particular, has mediated a substantial part of the interventions at the most recent United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC).

In the area of **the right to education**, this report observes a dominant theme: the urgent need for educational systems to adapt to global crises and rapid technological change. International discussions have highlighted the digital transformation and the necessity of equipping learners with future-proof skills. At the same time, resolutions from the UN Human Rights Council emphasize protecting education from the effects of conflict and ensuring inclusive access for all children. These crucial topics will be further addressed at the upcoming Social Forum of the Human Rights Council in October 2025.

Freedom of religion continues to be a site of significant tension. This report documents severe persecution of religious communities in some regions, while in others, the boundaries of religious expression are being actively negotiated through debates on blasphemy laws and the role of religion in public schools. International bodies have repeatedly condemned the rise of religious intolerance and hate speech, reaffirming the principle that freedom of religion must be protected for all. These issues are expected to be on the agenda of many states at the 79th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), which will convene in September 2025.

Debates around **family rights** have focused on legal protection, recognition of diverse family structures, and the rights of children. The digital age has introduced new challenges, particularly concerning the safety of minors online. In response, new regulations are being developed to strengthen both parental control tools and the accountability of digital platforms. However, significant global disagreements remain, especially regarding sexual and reproductive rights and the legal definition of marriage.



2. Right to Education

2.a United Nations

2.a.i Human Rights Council

2.a.i.i Resolutions

During the 59th session of the Human Rights Council (HRC), the right to education was an important theme, prominently featured in a dedicated resolution and reinforced in several others addressing women's rights, child protection, and new technologies. The Council adopted all by consensus.

The [resolution on the right to education](#) addresses several key areas, including Artificial Intelligence (AI), safety, and academic freedom. The resolution presents a dual perspective on digital technologies like AI. It recognizes their potential as empowering tools to facilitate the realization of the right to education. At the same time, it expresses concern about their potential negative effects, which include algorithmic bias, arbitrary surveillance, censorship, and the inhibition of critical thinking. In response, the resolution calls on

states to assess the implementation of technology in education, considering its impact on human rights. It also urges states to regulate education providers to ensure AI tools are inclusive and eliminate biases from their algorithms. The concept of safety is identified as an integral part of the right to education. The resolution urges states to recognize the right of every individual to be safe in education, defined as protection from any violation of their integrity. This encompasses protecting schools from attacks and military use and ensuring access to safe and reliable information and communications technology. Furthermore, the resolution stresses that academic freedom for staff and students is a "key dimension of the right to education". It notes with "deep concern" the increasing restrictions on this freedom. The resolution posits that academic freedom is at the heart of scientific progress and the transmission of knowledge as a public good. It emphasizes the responsibility of states and institutions to promote a safe and enabling environment for academic inquiry and debate, where the pursuit of knowledge is protected.

The importance of education was also central to the [resolution on accelerating efforts to achieve women's economic empowerment](#), which frames education as a "multiplier right" enabling the agency and autonomy of women and girls. It urges States to provide girls with access to at least 12 years of quality education and to support skills development and lifelong learning opportunities, particularly in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

Similarly, the [resolution on accelerating efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls](#) highlights education as a key preventive measure. It specifically calls for equal access to inclusive and equitable quality education, including evidence-based comprehensive sexuality education, to promote gender equality, challenge harmful stereotypes, and empower adolescents to recognize and respond to violence.

The [resolution on the elimination of female genital mutilation](#) calls for formal and informal education programs to inform children and families about the harmful effects of the practice.

The [resolution on enhancing international cooperation, technical assistance and capacity-building to strengthen national frameworks for the protection and empowerment of children in the digital space](#) emphasizes the need to develop digital literacy and skills among children, parents, and educators to ensure online safety. It recognizes that while digital technologies can enable children to enjoy their rights, they also pose risks to their physical and mental health, with girls often facing greater risk of discrimination and violence.

The [resolution on the human rights of internally displaced persons](#) (IDPs) expresses deep concern over the limited access to education for IDPs, especially girls and persons with disabilities. The [resolution on new and emerging digital technologies and human rights](#) also recognizes the importance of digital literacy, skills, and

lifelong access to digital learning for people of all ages and backgrounds to safely navigate the digital space.

2.a.i.ii Thematic Reports

During the 59th session of the Human Rights Council, the right to education was a recurring theme, with reports emphasizing its role in fostering peace, ensuring the rights of vulnerable groups, and navigating the challenges of the digital age and armed conflict. Thematic reports consistently highlight the need for inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all.

The **Special Rapporteur on the right to education**, Farida Shaheed, in her [report on the right to be safe in education](#), establishes that a safe learning environment is a fundamental and non-negotiable component of the right to education. The report details violations of academic freedom occurring globally, highlighting concerning police incursions on university campuses, arbitrary arrests, and the implementation of harsh disciplinary actions against both students and educators. These repressive measures have been particularly acute in the context of peaceful protests related to the conflict in Israel and Palestine, creating an atmosphere of fear and censorship. Furthermore, the Special Rapporteur raises serious concerns about the increasing use of surveillance technologies within schools, such as facial recognition and other forms of AI, which can have a chilling effect on freedom of expression and association. The report explicitly recommends a ban on these tools in educational settings to protect the rights and safety of the academic

In her [report on the visit to the United States of America](#), Farida Shaheed addresses the severe impact of political interference, widespread censorship through "educational gag orders", and politically motivated book bans targeting literature. These actions, the report argues, restrict access to diverse perspectives and undermine the principles of critical inquiry essential to a robust education. The report also delves into the complex legal landscape

of parental rights, highlighting the constitutional right of parents to direct their children's upbringing and education, which includes the freedom to choose private schooling. However, the Special Rapporteur clarifies that this right is not absolute and does not extend to controlling public school curricula or demanding exemptions from it, thereby underscoring the delicate balance between parental authority and the state's obligation to provide a comprehensive, inclusive, and non-discriminatory education for all students.

The **Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)**, in its [report on accessible and quality education for peace and tolerance for every child](#), underscores the importance of aligning education with Sustainable Development Goal 4.7, which calls for curricula that promote human rights, gender equality, and a culture of peace. The report stresses the need for child-centered and inclusive teaching methods that are responsive to diverse cultural and economic contexts, particularly for Indigenous Peoples and minorities, and highlights good practices from several countries that have successfully integrated education for peace and human rights into their national frameworks.

The importance of education for marginalized and vulnerable groups is another central theme. The **Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity**, Cecilia M. Bailliet, in her [report on international solidarity and Indigenous Peoples](#), highlights the need to improve Indigenous Peoples' access to higher education and to incorporate Indigenous worldviews into school curricula to foster solidarity and cultural preservation. The report also notes persistent challenges, such as lower literacy levels, high dropout rates, and a lack of digital infrastructure among Indigenous communities.

Further reports address education in the context of broader human rights challenges. In the [report on the annual full-day discussion on the human rights of women](#)

of the **OHCHR** identifies discriminatory family laws and practices as significant barriers that limit girls' right to education and economic independence. It also notes that global crises have led countries in the Global South to divert critical national expenditure away from essential services like education.

The **OHCHR report on violence against women and girls in criminal justice detention** emphasizes that education and training are key components of rehabilitation and social reintegration for incarcerated women.

The **OHCHR report on child rights mainstreaming across the United Nations** highlights the global education crisis, with 244 million children out of school, particularly in conflict zones, and underscores the central role of UN agencies like UNESCO and UNICEF in realizing the right to education for all children.

Finally, the **Independent Expert on sexual orientation and gender identity**, Graeme Reid, in his [report on his visit to Poland](#) notes that the new government has updated school curricula to address education on gender, sexuality, and non-discrimination.

2.a.i.iii Universal Periodic Reviewⁱ

In the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) reports for **Italy**, **El Salvador**, and the **Plurinational State of Bolivia**, the right to education is a prominent topic, with numerous States offering recommendations to strengthen educational systems and ensure equitable access for all.

For **Italy**, several countries recommend intensifying efforts to guarantee access to quality education without discrimination, particularly for children from ethnic minorities and migrant backgrounds. There were also calls to consider enshrining the right to education for all in the Constitution and to eliminate corporal punishment in all educational settings.

In the case of **El Salvador**, the government highlights its comprehensive education

reform, which has focused on improving infrastructure, teacher training, and technology, including providing computers to all students and teachers to reduce the digital divide. The "Growing Together Act" is also noted for incorporating digital literacy into both public and private education to ensure safe internet use. Member States commend El Salvador for its progress in promoting literacy and gender parity in education and offer recommendations to further improve access for all children and reduce school dropout rates.

For the **Plurinational State of Bolivia**, numerous recommendations focus on strengthening the quality and accessibility of the education system, especially in rural areas and for vulnerable groups such as Indigenous peoples. States also urge Bolivia to combat school dropout rates among Indigenous and Afro-descendant children, ensure inclusive education for children with disabilities, and incorporate human rights education into school curricula.

2.a.iv Intersessional Activities

The **OHCHR** held an Expert Workshop on the role of family and family-oriented approaches, policies and programmes in the promotion and protection of human rights and in sustainable development on May 28-29, 2025. The workshop brought together experts from States, United Nations entities, and civil society to share good practices and discuss key thematic areas.

The discussions covered four main themes. The first focused on achieving the full enjoyment of human rights by all family members, including the advancement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. The second theme addressed the promotion of lifelong learning opportunities, such as early childhood development and education, and ensuring cultural rights within the family context. The third explored enabling access to employment and decent work for parents and caregivers while protecting the rights of those requiring care. The final theme centered on family-oriented approaches to

ending poverty and hunger and promoting health and well-being for all ages.

2.a.ii UNESCO

2.a.ii.i Policy Papers

During the second quarter of 2025, **UNESCO** released two significant policy papers focused on the critical issue of education financing, particularly in the context of global crises and shrinking aid budgets.

A new policy paper, **Aid to education: Time for tough decisions**, published in June 2025, reveals a sharp drop in aid to education in 2024, the steepest decline since the 1990s, with deeper cuts expected by 2027. It notes that low-income countries, where aid constitutes a significant portion of public education spending, are critically affected. To address this funding crisis, the report calls for several key actions: channeling more aid through multilateral and country-led channels rather than earmarked projects, directing more funding through national budgets to strengthen systems, lowering the cost of borrowing for developing countries, and building a new development-oriented debt architecture.

Another policy paper, jointly published by the UNESCO GEM Report and Education Cannot Wait (ECW) in June 2025, is titled **Funding for education in crises: Data in distress**. This paper highlights that as global crises like armed conflict and climate shocks become more prolonged, the inability to effectively track education funding across humanitarian and development channels has become a critical weakness. It contends that the fragmented and unaligned data systems prevent a clear picture of available resources, which undermines planning and advocacy. The report's primary recommendation is to harmonize the main reporting systems to create a coherent and transparent evidence base for making better-informed financing decisions.

2.a.ii.ii Upcoming

Looking ahead, **UNESCO** released the provisional agenda for its **43rd General Conference**. This sets out the key priorities

and decisions that will shape the organization's direction. A central item on the agenda is the consideration and adoption of the Draft Programme and Budget for 2026-2029, which will define UNESCO's strategic objectives and resource allocation for education in the coming years. Other significant education-related items include the ongoing monitoring of the implementation of the resolution concerning educational and cultural institutions in the Occupied Arab Territories, as well as discussions on UNESCO's emergency assistance programme for Ukraine, reflecting the critical focus on protecting and providing education in situations of conflict and occupation.

UNESCO has initiated a global effort titled **"Regulating private tutoring for public good"** to address the rapid, worldwide expansion of private supplementary tutoring, also known as shadow educationⁱⁱ. Recognizing that this growing phenomenon has significant implications for social equity, UNESCO is currently exploring policy options and regulatory frameworks for governments. This ongoing work aims to mitigate the negative impacts of shadow education, such as the exacerbation of social inequalities and potential corruption, while harnessing its potential to support learners. The initiative is in line with UNESCO's call for a new social contract for education, which seeks to repair injustices and ensure that educational opportunities benefit society as a whole.

2.b Others

2.b.i OECD

The **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)** report, **Trends Shaping Education 2025**, serves as a strategic tool for policymakers and educators to navigate the future. It explores the major global forces transforming education systems, from early childhood to lifelong learning, to help build a resilient and adaptive future.

A central theme is the impact of global crises, such as geopolitical tensions and

ecological emergencies, on education. The report also places significant emphasis on the digital transformation, questioning how technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI) and VR (Virtual Reality) can reshape learning and highlighting the need to equip students with future-proof skills like critical thinking and adaptability for an automated world.

Furthermore, the report focuses on addressing inequality and social cohesion, examining how education can mitigate economic and social disparities. Ultimately, the report encourages a proactive approach, urging leaders to use foresight to ensure education systems not only respond to global trends but also actively shape a better future.

2.b.ii Council of Europe

The Council of Europe's Education Department has been actively advancing policies to support democratic values and student rights. In early July 2025, a series of meetings were held in Paris with the specific aim of strengthening those values and rights. The **Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU)** met to discuss the Council of Europe Education programme, while the **Ad Hoc Working Group on Automatic Recognition of Qualifications** continued its work on a proposal for a legal instrument on the automatic recognition of qualifications. These efforts underscore a strong commitment to fostering a more integrated and rights-based European Higher Education Areaⁱⁱⁱ.

2.b.iii European Union

On April 2, 2025, the **European Parliament (EP)** adopted its **annual report on human rights and democracy for 2024** by vote during the plenary session held in Strasbourg, reaffirming its commitment to universal values. While the report does not have a dedicated section on education, it links education to broader human rights and democratic principles. The report also emphasizes the need to protect children, which includes ensuring their access to education, especially in conflict zones where they are most vulnerable.

Separately, the **Danish Presidency** of the Council of the European Union outlined its educational priorities for its term running from July to December 2025. In a meeting of the Committee on Culture and Education (CULT) on July 16, 2025, the Danish Ministers for Children and Education, and Culture, presented the **Presidency's agenda**. A key focus is the revision of the strategic framework for the European Education Area towards 2030. The Presidency also aims to advance a new declaration on European cooperation in vocational education and training (VET) to succeed the Osnabrück Declaration^{iv}. Additional priorities include promoting mobility through the Erasmus+^v programme, supporting lifelong learning, and developing digital and green skills to create more inclusive education systems.

2.b.iv OEI

The **Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture (OEI)** and the **Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean (CAF)** have strengthened their cooperation to promote the digital transformation of educational management in the region. Through a new agreement, both institutions will lead the second phase of the Digital Transformation Program for Public Educational Administrations, aiming to make management more efficient, equitable, and of high quality.

The initiative will focus on technological modernization through the use of artificial intelligence in the educational administrations of Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, and Paraguay. Systematization reports will be prepared in each of these countries, and their key learnings will be summarized in a regional study that will include public policy recommendations.

This joint effort seeks to enhance the tools that facilitate the planning, monitoring, and evaluation of educational policies and programs, ensuring a better allocation of

resources and, ultimately, better educational outcomes for students in Latin America and the Caribbean.

2.b.v Global Developments on the Right to Education

Recent developments in the right to education reveal a focus on human rights, parental choice, and school environment. Legislative and judicial actions in several countries address issues ranging from homeschooling and school safety to gender-related content in curricula.

In **Argentina**, education is being positioned as a tool for social change. The Province of Córdoba enacted a **law** instituting a "Human Rights and Democracy Education Day" in all public and private schools to train students and teachers in eradicating discrimination. In a significant **ruling** for educational freedom, the Superior Court of Justice of La Pampa acquitted parents who had been convicted for their son's non-attendance at in-person classes, recognizing the validity of his education through the online "homeschooling" modality.

In **Chile**, the Chamber of Deputies introduced a new **bill** to protect the rights of vulnerable families by requiring that state-recognized educational establishments and public libraries have physical copies of the Bible available for consultation. The bill also mandates that the subject of Religion must be offered in all state-recognized schools, while respecting its optional nature and the preferential right of parents to educate their children according to their religious convictions.

In the **United States**, the Supreme Court issued a **ruling** that recognizes the right of parents—including Christians, Jews, and Muslims—to object to educational books they deem incompatible with their religious beliefs, a decision with significant implications for curricula, particularly concerning LGBTQI topics.



3. Freedom of Religion

3.a United Nations

3.a.i Human Rights Council

3.a.i.i Resolutions

During the 59th session of the HRC freedom of religion or belief was addressed as a cross-cutting right integrated into several resolutions on other themes, underscoring its connection to association, education, and the prevention of violence and discrimination. The Council adopted all by consensus.

The connection between religious freedom and other civil liberties was clearly established. The [resolution on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association](#) explicitly recognizes that these rights provide individuals with opportunities to engage in religious observance and calls on States to protect the rights of persons belonging to religious minorities. This is complemented by the [resolution on the right to education](#), which reaffirms the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion within educational settings, stresses the need to protect religious minorities in

schools, and notes that discrimination based on religion is a significant barrier to girls' education.

In the context of violence prevention, resolutions address both religious intolerance as a motivator and the misuse of religion to justify harmful acts. The [resolution on accelerating efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls](#) recognizes that violence can be motivated by religious intolerance and that discrimination based on religion or belief places women and girls at greater risk. Similarly, the [resolution on the elimination of female genital mutilation](#) firmly states that the practice cannot be justified on religious grounds and calls for engaging religious leaders in prevention efforts.

Finally, other resolutions place religious freedom within the broader context of international cooperation and current challenges. The [resolution on the enhancement of international cooperation in the field of human rights](#) frames dialogue among religions as a tool for enhancing cooperation and calls for the elimination of religious intolerance. The [resolution on new and emerging digital technologies and human rights](#) recognizes the need to

protect individuals from online discrimination based on religion, while the [resolution on the contribution of development to the enjoyment of all human rights](#) acknowledges the importance of bearing in mind religious backgrounds in human rights promotion.

3.a.i.ii Thematic Reports

During the 59th session of the HRC, several thematic reports highlighted the intersection of freedom of religion and belief with other fundamental rights, underscoring its relevance in diverse contexts ranging from education and gender equality to displacement and the protection of civil liberties.

The **Special Rapporteur on the right to education**, Farida Shaheed, notes in her [report on the right to be safe in education](#) that while learners retain their human rights within educational settings, the freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject to restrictions in the name of safety, provided such measures are lawful, necessary, and proportionate. A related report of the **Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on education for peace and tolerance** identifies that cultural and religious minorities sometimes face significant barriers, such as being denied school enrolment or facing restrictions on practicing their culture or religion within schools.

The [report on the visit of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education to the United States of America](#), raises concerns about religious schools receiving public funds through voucher programs. The report also notes that 80% of private schools in the U.S. are religious institutions, and any regulation must respect the constitutional guarantee of the free exercise of religion.

The connection between religious practices and women's rights is a key issue. In the report of the **OHCHR on the annual full-day discussion on the human rights of women**, it is pointed out that in systems of legal

pluralism, women in religious and customary marriages often lack full legal protections, which can lead to economic violence and exploitation. Similarly, in its [report on gendered dimensions of care and support systems](#), the **Working Group (WG) on discrimination against women and girls** observes that harmful practices against girls with disabilities are frequently justified through sociocultural and religious customs.

The report of the **WG on discrimination against women and girls on its visit to the Dominican Republic**, reiterates that freedom of religion or belief should never be used as a justification for discrimination against women and girls.

Furthermore, the **report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences**, Reem Alsalem, [on her visit to the UK and northern Ireland](#) highlights the abuse targeting Muslim women and girls.

The rights of migrants and displaced people were also linked to religious freedom. The **Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity**, Graeme Reid, notes in his [report](#) that States must apply the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement^{vi} without discrimination based on religion or belief, and that religious persecution can be a significant driver of displacement.

The **Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants**, Gehad Madi, points out in the [report "Phenomenon of migrants going missing or subjected to enforced disappearance – human rights analysis"](#) that discrimination based on religion is a challenge some migrants face during their journeys.

Other reports touch on broader societal issues. The **Special Rapporteur on freedom of peaceful assembly and of association**, Gina Romero, states in her [report on the Impact of the 2023–2025 “super election” cycle on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association](#) that under international law, a political party may only

be lawfully prohibited if it advocates for national, racial, or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to violence or discrimination.

The **Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association**, Clément Nyaletsossi Voule, notes in the [report on his visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) that while the Constitution of the country protects religious freedom, discrimination and attacks against religious minorities persist.

The **Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions**, Morris Tidball-Binz, affirms in his [report "Rights of families of victims of unlawful killings"](#) that the right to freedom of religion includes the right of families to carry out final rites and burials according to their cultural and religious beliefs.

The report of the **Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance**, Ashwini K.P, [on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance](#) emphasizes the significance of religion in understanding complex forms of discrimination. In the context of this report, in her [visit to Brazil](#), Ashwini K.P, details how systemic racism intersects with religious intolerance, a phenomenon referred to as "religious racism," including attacks against Afro-Brazilian religious sites (terreiros) and incidents of Islamophobia.

Finally, the thematic report of Ashwini K.P [on combating the glorification of Nazism](#) also references submissions detailing concerns in various countries, including the misuse of "religious freedom" rhetoric by hate groups in the United States to legitimize extremist views and the global surge in anti-Jewish hatred.

3.a.i.iii Universal Periodic Review

In the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) reports of [Italy](#) and the [Plurinational State of Bolivia](#), several states make recommendations concerning religious

freedom and the protection of religious minorities.

For **Italy**, recommendations focus on strengthening protections against discrimination. Bangladesh recommends that Italy continue its efforts to eliminate all forms of discrimination against religious and ethnic minorities. Pakistan calls for the enactment and enforcement of legislation to counter hate speech and violence targeting religious minorities, while Mexico urges Italy to combat hate speech directed at religious and other communities.

For the **Plurinational State of Bolivia**, Argentina recommends that the state respect the autonomy, independence, and freedom of expression of non-governmental organizations, including religious ones.

3.b Others

3.b.i European Union

On April 2nd, the **EP** adopted its [annual report on human rights and democracy for 2024](#), in which it addresses the protection of religious freedom as a key component of its commitment to universal values. The Parliament reiterates its strong condemnation of all forms of discrimination, including those based on religion or belief, referencing the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief^{vii} as a foundational text. The report expresses concern over the persecution of religious minorities worldwide and calls for renewed efforts to protect freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. It also addresses the rise of hate speech, both online and offline, which often targets individuals based on their religious affiliation, urging the EU and its Member States to take decisive action to counter this trend.

This trimester, the **EP** has also addressed the urgent need to protect religious minorities in conflict zones. In a [motion for a resolution on Syria](#), the Parliament highlights the suffering of the country's diverse religious and ethnic communities—

including Christians, Alawites, Druze, and Yazidis—at the hands of the Assad regime and terrorist groups such as Daesh. The resolution urges the Syrian authorities to conduct swift and independent investigations and to ensure the safety of all places of worship. Furthermore, the EP calls on the EU and its Member States to increase their efforts in monitoring and countering terrorism in Syria and reiterates its support for a just political transition that includes a structured dialogue with all religious and ethnic communities as a cornerstone for peace and stability.

3.b.ii Global Developments on the Rights to Freedom of Religion

Recent developments across the Americas and Europe highlight a dynamic and often contentious landscape for freedom of religion and conscience. Key issues include the separation of church and state, the rights of religious minorities, conscientious objection, and the role of religious symbols in public life.

In **Latin America**, the **Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR)' 2024 annual report** notes regional trends in anti-discrimination measures related to religious freedom and the rights of Indigenous peoples. Regarding **Cuba**, the IACHR documents violations of religious freedom, including the persecution of religious figures and the prohibition of public acts of worship, such as Holy Week processions. The report details harassment following demonstrations, the selective detention of activists for calling a peaceful march at a church, and the denial of religious assistance to prisoners. Similarly, in **Nicaragua**, the IACHR observes persistent repression against members of the Catholic

Church and other religious organizations, with authorities banning public processions, monitoring services, and harassing, detaining, and exiling religious leaders. These actions also extend to evangelical groups, with the government canceling the legal status of many Christian organizations. Finally, in **Peru**, the Annual Report notes that the beliefs of Indigenous peoples have not been respected, indicating broader violations of their rights.

In **Chile**, the debate around abortion brings issues of conscience to the forefront. The Episcopal Conference issued a **declaration** affirming that all human life must be protected in response to a proposed law on legal abortion. The government has taken **steps** to modify regulations concerning conscientious objection for medical professionals in abortion cases, and legislative proposals are introduced to hold a national plebiscite on the matter.

In **Spain**, legislative and judicial discussions shape the boundaries of religious expression. The Parliament of Catalonia debates **proposals** to prohibit religion classes in state-subsidized private schools, alongside other measures related to Islam. At the national level, the Episcopal Conference and interfaith groups discuss a **proposal** to repeal the criminal offense of blasphemy (hurting religious feelings) from the Penal Code, while also creating an office to report religious hate crimes.

Meanwhile, in **Australia**, the Parliament of New South Wales considers a **bill** that increases access to abortion and requires health professionals with conscientious objections to refer patients to non-objecting practitioners.



4. Family Rights

4.a United Nations

4.a.i Human Rights Council

4.a.i.i Resolutions

During the 59th session, family rights were not addressed in a stand-alone resolution but emerged as a significant cross-cutting theme, particularly in resolutions focused on the rights of women and children. These texts collectively underscore the importance of the family unit, the need to support parents and shared responsibilities, and the imperative to protect families from violence and disruption. The Council adopted all by consensus.

The link between family-related policies and women's economic participation is strongly affirmed in the [resolution on accelerating efforts to achieve women's economic empowerment](#). This text recognizes that the sharing of family responsibilities is crucial for creating an enabling family environment for women's empowerment. It recalls the need for special protection for mothers before and after childbirth and calls

on States to expand access to paid maternity, paternity, and parental leave to promote shared responsibilities between parents.

In the context of violence prevention, resolutions highlight the dual role of the family as a space for both protection and potential harm. The [resolution on accelerating efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls](#) condemns harmful practices such as forced marriage. At the same time, it recognizes the positive contribution that family members can have in preventing violence by providing a supportive environment for girls and urges the promotion of equal sharing of responsibilities.

Similarly, the [resolution on the elimination of female genital mutilation](#) calls for the implementation of family-friendly policies and for educational programs to be directed at parents, guardians, and families to prevent this harmful practice.

Finally, the severe impact of crisis on family life was acknowledged. The [resolution on the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced](#)

persons explicitly lists the disruption of family links as one of the specific and serious difficulties faced by those who are displaced.

4.a.i.ii Thematic Reports

During the 59th session of the Human Rights Council, numerous thematic reports underscored the critical role of the family as a fundamental unit of society and a primary site for the protection and realization of human rights. Discussions consistently highlight the severe impacts of conflict, detention, migration, and discriminatory laws on family life, with a particular focus on the rights of children, women, and marginalized groups.

Several reports detail the devastating consequences of conflict and displacement of family unity. The **OHCHR report on education for peace and tolerance** notes that in 2024, over 473 million children were living in conflict zones, facing severe violations of their rights, including the right to family life.

The importance of family reunification for refugees and displaced children is a central theme in the **OHCHR report on child rights mainstreaming**, which highlights the work of UNHCR and International Organization for Migration (IOM) in safeguarding unaccompanied minors and addressing family separation.

The **Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants**, Gehad Madi, further emphasizes in his **report on phenomenon of migrants going missing or subjected to enforced disappearance** that States have an obligation to avoid separating families during immigration detention and to reunite those who have been separated. This is echoed in his **report on his visit to Panama** which stresses the need for child protection entities in reception centers to verify family ties.

The impact of parental incarceration on children and family life is another significant concern. The **OHCHR report on violence against women and girls in criminal justice detention** highlights that separation from

children is especially severe for incarcerated women and that women with dependent children should not be imprisoned unless absolutely necessary. The report also notes the high number of mothers detained with their babies in extremely difficult conditions and calls for greater use of non-custodial measures.

A central focus of many reports is the persistence of discriminatory laws and practices within the family. The **report on the annual full-day discussion on the human rights of women** states that there can be no equality in society without equality in the family, identifying discriminatory family laws related to marriage, divorce, custody, and inheritance as a root cause of economic violence against women. The report calls for the repeal of marital power and the prohibition of child marriage, which deprives girls of education and career opportunities. The **Working Group on discrimination against women and girls**, in its **report on care and support systems**, further elaborates on this, noting that the disproportionate burden of unpaid care work on women, undermines their rights and economic participation. The report highlights the need to combine parental benefits with access to quality childcare. Its **visit report to the Dominican Republic** notes that despite the legal prohibition of child marriage, the country still has one of the highest rates of early unions in the region.

Finally, several reports affirmed the rights of families in the context of grave human rights violations. The **Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions**, Morris Tidball-Binz, provides in his **report on the rights of families of victims of unlawful killings** a comprehensive analysis of the rights of families of victims of unlawful killings, defining "family" broadly to include social families or "families of choice". The report underscores the profound and long-term trauma experienced by families and delineates their rights to truth, justice, reparations, and the right to mourn with dignity.

4.a.i.iii Universal Periodic Review

In the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) reports, Member States offer specific recommendations concerning family rights, highlighting both areas of progress and persistent challenges in national legal and policy frameworks.

For **Italy**, recommendations center on strengthening social support and ensuring legal equality for all family structures. The Italian delegation states that families are central to the country's budget policies, with measures to support large families and promote women's work-life balance. Several countries, including Iceland, Ireland, Portugal, and Canada, recommend the full legal recognition of same-sex couples and their families, including equal access to marriage and adoption rights.

In the review of **El Salvador**, the delegation describes the country as "pro-life," protecting human life from the moment of conception, and highlight the "Growing Together Act" for the comprehensive protection of children. In response, Egypt recommends that El Salvador continue to promote the social values of the family as the basic unit of society. Other States, such as Italy, recommend implementing measures to prevent child marriage, while Chile urges the government to advance comprehensive policies to prevent adolescent pregnancy.

For the **Plurinational State of Bolivia**, recommendations focus on the protection of children and the strengthening of family support. Pakistan recommends strengthening support for families with young children. Several States, including Mauritius, express serious concern over child marriage, recommending that Bolivia amend its legislation to remove all exceptions that allow for the marriage of minors under the age of 18, particularly in Indigenous and rural communities.

4.b Others

4.b.i Council of Europe

The **Council of Europe** has strengthened its commitment to protecting the rights of children within family legal disputes by adopting two new **recommendations on the rights and best interests of the child in parental separation and in care proceedings**. These recommendations aim to ensure that the child's best interests are a primary consideration in all decisions, providing national authorities with clear guidance on assessing these interests. The texts emphasize the implementation of the child's procedural rights, including the right to be informed and to be heard, and respect for the rule of law and non-discrimination. Notably, children and young people were actively consulted during the drafting process, ensuring their lived experiences shaped the final recommendations, which align with the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027)^{viii}.

4.b.ii European Union

The **EP's annual report on human rights and democracy for 2024**, addresses several key issues concerning family rights. The report notes the global backlash against women's and girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights, condemns the use of sexual and gender-based violence as a weapon of war, and deplores the denial of essential health services in conflict situations. It highlights the EU's commitment to the Istanbul Convention as a key tool to protect families from violence and supports the revised EU Guidelines on children and armed conflict.

Separately, the **European Commission (EC)** has published **new guidelines under the Digital Services Act (DSA) to protect minors online** as part of its "Shaping Europe's digital future" strategy. The guidelines aim to establish a secure online space where children's rights are protected. A key provision is the prohibition of targeted advertising based on the profiling of minors. Online platforms are now required to design their services with children's safety as a

priority, including writing terms and conditions in an easily understandable language. Furthermore, large tech companies are mandated to conduct annual risk assessments and implement tools such as parental controls and effective age assurance systems. The EU is also developing a **Code of Conduct for age-appropriate design** to provide platforms with a framework for creating safer online experiences for children.

4.b.iii Global Developments on Family Rights

Recent legal and policy developments across the Americas reveal significant discussions and evolving interpretations of family rights, particularly concerning adoption, the legal framework around the beginning of life, and the balance of rights within the family unit. These developments

reflect ongoing debates about the protection of children, parental rights, and reproductive autonomy.

In **Chile**, family rights were at the forefront of the legislative agenda with a major **reform** of the adoption system. The Senate moved a comprehensive adoption reform bill to the immediate discussion phase, and the National Congress later communicated the final approval of the text to the President.

In **Spain**, the Constitutional Court issued a **ruling** that addresses the balance of rights within the family in cases of disagreement. The Court establishes that in contexts of conflict between parents over the religious upbringing of a child, the best interest of the minor and the protection of their right to religious freedom prevail over the individual rights of the parents

Annex

Abbreviations

AI: Artificial Intelligence (AI)

CAF: Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean

CDEDU: The Steering Committee for Education

CULT: European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education

EC: European Commission

ECW: Education Cannot Wait

EP: European Parliament

HRC: Human Rights Council

IDPs: Internally displaced persons.

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

OEI: Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture

OHCHR: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

RES: Resolution

STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

SR: Special Rapporteur

UNHRC: United Nations Human Rights Council.

UN: United Nations

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNGA: Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund, i

UPR: Universal Periodic Review

VET: vocational education and training

VR: Virtual Reality

ⁱ Every four years, each Member of the United Nations is evaluated by other members of the organization its human rights performance. This process is known as the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). One of the main steps in the UPR assessment process is the publication of the Report of the UPR Working Group, through which other States can make statements and recommendations on human rights issues to the State under review

ⁱⁱ Private, fee-paying education with the aim of helping students succeed in formal education.

ⁱⁱⁱ The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) is a group of 48 countries that cooperate to achieve comparable and compatible higher education systems throughout Europe.

^{iv} The Osnabrück Declaration is a key European policy agreement aimed at modernizing and strengthening vocational education and training (VET) across the European Union and beyond. It was adopted on November 30, 2020, by ministers from EU Member States, candidate countries, and European Economic Area (EEA) countries, along with the European Commission and social partner.

^v Erasmus+ is the EU's programme to support education, training, youth and sport in Europe.

^{vi} The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement are a set of international standards developed by the United Nations in 1998 to protect and assist internally displaced persons (IDPs) — people who are forced to flee their homes but remain within their country's borders.

^{vii} The Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief is a formal statement adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1981. It sets out the international standards for promoting and protecting freedom of religion or belief, and eliminating discrimination based on those grounds.

^{viii} The Council of Europe launched its Strategy for the Rights of the Child 2022-2027 in which it identified six strategic objectives to ensure the rights and best interests of the child, and three cross-cutting issues (gender-sensitive approach, anti-discrimination approach, child participation approach) to be integrated into all these areas to guarantee all children equal access to and full enjoyment of their rights.