

# SAFE AND MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION IN UN EVENTS

The safe and meaningful engagement of civil society with the United Nations, including youth, is essential to the work of the organization<sup>1</sup>. Protection ensures that every person can safely exercise their human rights, particularly the rights to freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly, without facing threats nor reprisals.

While everyone can experience misconduct during a UN event, there are several factors that may increase the *level of exposure*; having a speaker role increases visibility, which can present both opportunities and risks. Additionally, factors such as *gender, class, race, sexual orientation, age, religion, disability, and others* can intersect, increasing risk and/or creating situations of vulnerability.

The UN has a **zero-tolerance policy to sexual exploitation and abuse**. This includes any sexual activity with minors, or any actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions; any actual or attempted abuse of position of vulnerability, differential power or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.

Based on the [UN System Code of Conduct](#), UN events should allow participation in an inclusive, respectful and safe environment. These events are guided by the highest ethical and professional standards. All participants are expected to behave with integrity and respect towards all people attending or involved.

For further reference, access the [UN Guidance Note on Protection and Promotion of Civic Space](#)

## 1. Rule and Regulations for Visitors to the UN premises

“Within United Nations premises, all persons are required to comply with safety and security regulations, as well as the rules and procedures of the organization. Any act that disrupts the normal functioning of the organization’s programmatic activities, such as public displays of any form, including, but not limited to, clothing, banners, placards or other written or visual means, as well as vocal/audio sounds, gatherings, or demonstrations of any kind, including passive, is not allowed. All individuals present on the United Nations premises are expected to fully cooperate with United Nations security officers at all times. Refusal to comply with applicable regulations may result in temporary detention or removal from or denial of access to the premises in accordance with Section

10 of the United Nations Headquarters Agreement and ST/AI/2019/5, entitled “Authority of United Nations Security Officers”. [Arrival | United Nations](#)

## 2. Tools and resources for a Safe Engagement

All youth participants and speakers at UN events are strongly encouraged to complete the virtual training “[Engaging Safely at the UN](#)” before their engagement. The course aims to prevent abuse of authority, discrimination, harassment (including sexual harassment), sexual exploitation and intimidation in the context of youth engagement with the UN. The training<sup>3</sup> is available in Arabic, English, French, and Spanish.

## 3. If something happens, what can you do?

All participants, including youth speakers, have the right to unhindered access to the United Nations, to communicate freely with its representatives, and to participate safely in UN-related events. While most engagements are safe, please assess your specific situation and potential risk factors. If you are concerned that your speaking role and participation in a specific UN event may put you at risk, please:

1. First, inform the focal point in the entity sponsoring your participation in the event.
2. Additionally, for related advice, inform the UN Youth Office and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights:
  - UN Youth Office Focal Points: Romeral Ortiz Quintilla, at [youthaffairs@un.org](mailto:youthaffairs@un.org)
  - OHCHR Reprisals Focal Points: Adriana Zarraluqui at: [ohchr-reprisals@un.org](mailto:ohchr-reprisals@un.org)

If you, in fact, experience any act of intimidation or reprisals related to your participation during the event, please report this promptly to OHCHR Reprisals Focal Points: Adriana Zarraluqui at: [ohchr-reprisals@un.org](mailto:ohchr-reprisals@un.org)

- A quick guide on submitting information about reprisals can be accessed in [العربية](#) | [中文](#) | [English](#) | [Français](#) | [Русский](#) | [Español](#)

## 4. Digital Safety & Social Media Use

For many young participants, social media is a powerful tool to share insights, amplify voices, and build solidarity during UN events. However, it can also present specific safety risks, particularly for those with high visibility or who speak on sensitive issues.

- Youth participants are encouraged to consider their privacy settings and personal boundaries when sharing content online.
- Engage respectfully online: When sharing content related to UN events on social media, treat all participants with dignity and respect. Avoid language or images that could be harmful, discriminatory, or violate someone's privacy.
- Uphold ethical standards: Social media use during UN events should reflect the same high standards of integrity, professionalism, and inclusivity expected in all in-person interactions. Always seek consent before posting photos, quotes, or videos of others.

Safe participation includes both in-person and online spaces. Together, we can ensure that all participants feel protected, respected, and empowered to engage fully.