

Submission following Independent Expert’s Call for Input on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons on business and human rights of older persons

I. Introduction

October 7 Justice Without Borders (O7J) is an Israel-based public-interest law firm dedicated to securing justice and accountability of perpetrators and their accessories on behalf of victims of the October 7 atrocities. O7J was established to address a critical global accountability gap, representing over 440 victims from the outset of the atrocity—61 of whom were over the age of 60—including murdered civilians, hostages (both murdered and released), and displaced survivors¹. The organisation represents some of the oldest victims and survivors of the atrocity, including hostages Yocheved Lifschitz (85, released) and Oded Lifschitz (83, killed) from Kibbutz Nir Oz, both of whom have been involved in peace activism for decades².

We lead strategic litigation on behalf of victims of core international crimes, including gross or systematic violations of international human rights. We provide victim-centred legal representation before international and domestic courts and human rights mechanisms, ensuring that the voices of survivors, bereaved families, and released hostages and their families, including older persons, shape the global record and the needed legal response based on universal values and unconditional humanity. Our mission is to represent victims in their internationally recognized rights to **truth, justice, reparations, and non-repetition** (“the Joint Principles”), and providing our expertise before UN Human Rights Mechanisms and Special Procedures.

¹ The organization remains available to provide supporting documentation, detailed case information, and testimony for verification purposes upon request of the mandate holder.

² Sharone Lifschitz, *‘Two years after 7 October and the kidnap of my parents, hate is in fashion. For all our sakes, we need compassion’* (The Guardian, 7 October 2025)

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/oct/07/7-october-kidnap-parents-israel> accessed 30 January 2026

This submission responds to the Call for Inputs issued by the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons³, aiming to inform research on the intersection of business activities, digital platforms, and older persons' human rights. It focuses on the atrocities committed on and since 7 October 2023 by Palestinian Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs) and examines the role of business enterprises in these context.

Failures by business enterprises to prevent human rights violations and conduct context-sensitive due diligence, as required under the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), have facilitated misuse of digital platforms, media, and weapons in armed conflict. These failures have resulted in enabling severe violations on older persons' rights to privacy, dignity, personal security, psychological and bodily integrity, and life, and the commission of crimes such as genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes.

These harms are compounded by intersectional vulnerabilities, including gender, disability, and limited digital literacy, restricting older persons' ability to protect themselves or seek remedies. The submission highlights the importance of preventing corporate complicity through context-sensitive human rights due diligence, ensuring effective remedies for victims, and holding perpetrators and their aiders and abettors accountable, and thereby ending impunity for atrocity crimes.

II. Legal Framework Business Responsibility, Human Rights, and Older Persons

Although there has been significant normative development within the UN on older persons' rights, there is currently no binding international treaty addressing corporate responsibility toward this group. Older persons' rights are protected under general human rights law, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)⁴ and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)⁵, which cover the rights to life, dignity, privacy, health, and food, the prohibitions of torture, degrading and inhumane treatment and enforced disappearance among others, without discrimination or adverse distinction. Other instruments, such as the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities⁶ demands States to take necessary measures to ensure the protection of persons with disabilities – including older persons—in peacetime and during armed conflict. Similarly,

³ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Call for input by the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons on business and human rights of older persons* (issued for submissions due by 31 January 2026), OHCHR.

⁴ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, adopted 16 December 1966, entered into force 23 March 1976, UN Treaty Series, vol. 999, p. 171.

⁵ International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, adopted 16 December 1966, entered into force 3 January 1976, UN Treaty Series, vol. 993, p. 3.

⁶ *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. 13 Dec. 2006. United Nations Treaty Series, vol. 2515, p. 3.

the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women also urges the States to pay attention to the violence suffered by older women⁷. However, these instruments do not explicitly account for the intersectional disadvantages that older persons face, including disability, medical needs, and digital illiteracy, underscoring the need for age-responsive due diligence frameworks, particularly in corporate operations that may contribute to human rights violations.

Some age-specific normative initiatives have emerged, including the Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons (A-70)⁸, the UN Principles for Older Persons (1991)⁹, and OHCHR guidance on older persons in situations of armed conflict¹⁰, which recognizes their heightened vulnerability in crises, displacement, and conflict settings. At the international level, the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWG-A) and the ongoing intergovernmental process toward a UN Convention on Older Persons (expected 2025)¹¹ demonstrate the growing recognition of the need for dedicated protections.

Nonetheless, age remains inconsistently recognized as a prohibited ground of discrimination in corporate law and due diligence frameworks, limiting accountability for enterprises whose operations may contribute to human rights violations. The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs)¹² offer guidance on the responsibilities of business enterprises to prevent, mitigate, and remedy human rights harms, but the lack of age-specific standards leaves older persons insufficiently protected in practice.

Under Principle 11, Pillar II of UNGPs¹³, business enterprises are expected to *avoid infringing on the human rights of others and to address adverse human rights impacts with which they are involved* (Principle 11). This responsibility applies independently of States' obligations and extends across all business activities and relationships.

⁷ General recommendation No. 27 (2010) on older women and protection of their human rights.

⁸ Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons, adopted 15 June 2015, OAS Treaty Series No. 70, entered into force 11 August 2017.

⁹ United Nations Principles for Older Persons, adopted by UN General Assembly Resolution 46/91, 16 December 1991.

¹⁰ United Nations. (2025, July 18). *Older persons in armed conflict and peacebuilding: Note by the Secretary-General (A/80/203)*. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/a80203-older-persons-armed-conflict-and-peacebuilding-note-secretary>

¹¹ United Nations, Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWG-A), established by UN General Assembly Resolution 65/182 (2010); United Nations, Intergovernmental process toward a UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons, ongoing (expected 2025).

¹² United Nations, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations "Protect, Respect and Remedy" Framework*, UN Doc. HR/PUB/11/04 (2011).

¹³ **United Nations**, *Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations "Protect, Respect and Remedy" Framework*, UN Doc. **A/HRC/17/31**, Principle 11 (2011).

In practice, this responsibility requires business enterprises to take a range of concrete and interrelated measures. Enterprises must **avoid causing or contributing to adverse human rights impacts** and must address such impacts where they occur, including in situations where harm is foreseeable through their operations, products, services, or business relationships (Principles 11–13). They are further required to conduct ongoing, context-sensitive **human rights due diligence** in order to identify, prevent, mitigate, and account for how they address both actual and potential human rights impacts (Principles 17–18). This responsibility also entails the **establishment of effective governance and monitoring mechanisms**, including internal policies, oversight structures, and risk-mitigation measures designed to prevent discrimination, exploitation, and other human rights abuses throughout business operations (Principle 16). Finally, where an enterprise has caused or contributed to harm, it must provide for, or cooperate in, **the provision of effective remedies**, including restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction, and guarantees of non-repetition (Principle 22).

Although the UNGPs apply universally, they do not contain age-specific guidance. As will be demonstrated in the case of October 7 atrocity, older persons face distinct and heightened risks as consumers, users, employees, and individuals affected by business operations.

III. Context: Commission of Core International Crimes on 7 October 2023

The deliberate and planned attacks of 7 October 2023 against an unarmed civilian population¹⁴ by Palestinian NSAGs, including Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, the Al-Aqsa Martyrs’ Brigades, the Palestinian Mujahideen Movement and the Popular Resistance Committees¹⁵ involved systematic and widespread torture, rape, sexual violence, degrading and inhumane treatment, murder, extermination, desecration of the dead, hostage-taking. These acts effectively constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity and possibly genocide^{16,17}.

¹⁴ Human Rights Watch, *I Can’t Erase All the Blood from My Mind: Palestinian Armed Groups’ October 7 Assault on Israel* (Human Rights Watch, August 2024) https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media_2024/08/israel_palestine0724web.pdf accessed 30 January 2026.

¹⁵ Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, *Detailed findings on attacks carried out on and after 7 October 2023 in Israel*, A/HRC/56/CRP.3, 10 June 2024, Human Rights Council, United Nations.

¹⁶ Human Rights Watch, *“I Can’t Erase All the Blood from My Mind”: Palestinian Armed Groups’ October 7 Assault on Israel* (17 July 2024), HRW

¹⁷ Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, *Detailed findings on attacks carried out on and after 7 October 2023 in Israel*, A/HRC/56/CRP.3, 10 June 2024, Human Rights Council, United Nations, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session56/a-hrc-56-crp-3.pdf>

Older persons were disproportionately affected due to their heightened vulnerability during armed conflict, consistent with the findings in OHCHR's report on older persons in conflict¹⁸. Of the 1200+ people murdered, over 800 were civilians, including 286 women, 40 children under the age of 18, and around **180 persons over the age of 60**¹⁹. Out of 251 hostages over 20% were above the age of 65. Some were in their 80s, and at least 5 were murdered in captivity.

Social Media Platforms

Documented incidents following 7 October indicate that social media platforms, including Facebook/Meta, TikTok, Instagram, Twitter, and Telegram, were intentionally and systematically used **before, during and after the attack**^{20 21} to terrorise the Israeli population. Hamas captors evidently livestreamed and uploaded propaganda videos on social media of unarmed older civilians being starved, tortured, brutally murdered, taken hostage, and treated in degrading condition, as their effort to use psychological torture and terrorism against their families in view of achieving their political objective. One horrific example was a 74 years old civilian, Bracha Levinson, who was murdered livestreamed on her Facebook page with Hamas gunmen desecrating her body²². In fact, older persons were particularly targeted, due to their founding role in the kibbutzim-agricultural communal villages that were systematically targeted on October 7, 2023. This demonstrates both direct targeting and systemic, instrumentalized neglect of older civilians, undermining their rights to life, dignity, and bodily and mental integrity.

During the course of hostage-captivity, Hamas also released videos featuring physical and psychological abuse of abducted hostages, including elderly citizens, on platforms such as TikTok²³. Personal social media accounts of older persons were accessed, manipulated, or used

¹⁸ United Nations, *Older Persons in Armed Conflict and Peacebuilding: Note by the Secretary-General* (UN Doc A/80/203, 18 July 2025) <https://docs.un.org/en/A/80/203> accessed 30 January 2026

¹⁹ Government of Israel, *Swords of Iron: War in the South – 7 October 2023*, Government of Israel official webpage, available at: <https://www.gov.il/en/pages/swords-of-iron-war-in-the-south-7-oct-2023>

²⁰ Haaretz, *Facebook Parent Company Facing \$1B Lawsuit Over Livestreamed Terror on October 7*, 6 August 2025, available at: <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2025-08-06/ty-article/.premium/facebook-parent-company-facing-1b-lawsuit-over-livestreamed-terror-on-october-7/00000198-7ccb-d50b-adba-7dcfe1910000>

²¹ *Families of Oct. 7 victims sue Reuters, AP reporters, claiming they partook in Hamas atrocities*, **The Washington Times**, 29 February 2024, available at: <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2024/feb/29/families-of-oct-7-victims-sue-reuters-ap-reporters/>

²² Samira Said, *Grandson recounts graphic video of beloved grandmother killed by Hamas* (ABC News, 11 November 2023) <https://abcnews.go.com/International/grandson-recounts-graphic-video-beloved-grandmother-killed-hamas/story?id=103954038> accessed 30 January 2026

²³ Groppi, M., & da Cruz Amador, V. (2023, October 20). *Technology and its pivotal role in Hamas's successful attacks on Israel*. GNET Research. <https://gnet-research.org/2023/10/20/technology-and-its-pivotal-role-in-hamass-successful-attacks-on-israel/>

to disseminate violent material intended to terrorize civilians. Further, platforms were allegedly used to coordinate terrorist activity, transmitting messages and instructions to operatives²⁴.

News agencies also contributed to harm. Photographers affiliated with international agencies, including the Associated Press (AP) and Reuters, documented and transmitted images of an older Israeli woman, Yaffa Adar from Kibbutz Nir Oz during her forced abduction²⁵. These images were disseminated in real time in clear violation of fundamental rights, violence and without consent, under circumstances of extreme vulnerability. Families reported that their publication and circulation caused extreme harm, violating the dignity and psychological integrity of older persons. Another case shows that Muthana al-Najjar, a Gazan journalist, accompanied the Hamas militias as they invaded Kibbutz Nir Oz and documented the atrocity committed against a civilian population, including sharing a picture of two gunmen stepping triumphantly on the body of a murdered civilian²⁶.

These incidents expose profound and systemic deficiencies in corporate responsibility and platform governance, particularly with respect to safeguarding older users from torture, violence, and psychological harm, protecting their privacy and personal data, and ensuring trauma-informed moderation of content. During and after the October 7 attacks, violent and degrading content depicting older persons was widely circulated without meaningful oversight or removal, often remaining accessible long after initial dissemination. Harmful accounts were left unblocked, and internal review and monitoring mechanisms failed to detect, mitigate, or prevent foreseeable harm. The absence of rapid response procedures and context-sensitive safeguards allowed the exploitation of older persons' digital presence, amplifying psychological trauma for victims and their families. In this context, social media platforms and news agencies may have contributed to, facilitated, or abetted human rights abuses, while neglecting their responsibility to implement age-sensitive due diligence and take reasonable steps to prevent harm linked to their products, services, or content distribution, in direct violation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGP Principles 13, 17–18). This pattern of omission underscores the urgent need for systemic reform and accountability mechanisms to prevent future violations against highly vulnerable populations.

In addition to violating the UNGP principles (13, 17-18) on preventing human rights abuses, the EU Digital Services Act (DSA), Articles 9 and 16 obligate platforms to act promptly against illegal content and to implement effective “notice and action” mechanisms for users to report enforcement-worthy material, while Articles 15–17 require transparent moderation, internal complaint handling, and user redress. Based on this, Meta, TikTok, and other social

²⁴ Karo, A. (2025, October 20). *Documentary evidence of Hamas–Al Jazeera relations and cooperation*. The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center. <https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/documentary-evidence-of-hamas-al-jazeera-relations-and-cooperation/>

²⁵ Ynet, “הסבתא והבת תועדו נחטפות על ידי צלמי סוכנות הידיעות: ‘לעמוד ולצלם – טרור לכל דבר’” [“Grandmother and daughter were filmed being abducted by news agency photographers: ‘Standing and filming is terrorism’”], 9 November 2023, available at: <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hyorbh9ma>

²⁶ Gil Hoffman, ‘This is how Hamas used Gazan journalists for the Oct. 7 massacre’ (The Jerusalem Post, 18 March 2024) <https://www.jpost.com/opinion/article-791964> accessed 31 January 2026.

media corporates may have failed to meet these DSA removal and transparency obligations in practice, including for terrorist content, thereby exacerbating risks to older persons, who face heightened vulnerability to psychological harm, exploitation, and invasion of privacy in crisis situations. Similarly, under EU data protection law (GDPR), the processing and dissemination of identifiable victims' personal data without valid consent or legal basis may violate core privacy rights enshrined in Articles 5 (lawfulness, fairness, transparency)²⁷, 13–14 (information duties)²⁸, and the general requirement to protect personal data as a fundamental right, including of older persons whose images are shared in extreme circumstances.

In terms of IHL, while journalists operating in conflict zones are generally recognized as protected (Geneva Convention IV, Art. 79; Additional Protocol I, Art. 79)²⁹, this protection is forfeited if journalists directly participate in hostilities. **These Reporters crossed the line between reporting under the freedom of press and directly contributing to the commission of core international crimes. This can occur when reporting acts as an instrument to spread terror or provide operational advantage to armed groups (Threshold of Harm), involves coordination of timing or location to facilitate attacks (Direct Causation), or is conducted with a clear nexus to armed actors (Belligerent Nexus). Evidence indicates that some media personnel, including agents paid by AP, Reuters and Al Jazeera staff³⁰, directly participated in the commission of atrocities, and in other cases were part of the planned and coordinated attack, including the ostentatious, and obscene 'release ceremonies' complicit or as members of unlawful Non-State Armed Groups (including recognized terrorist groups), thereby contributing to attacks against protected civilian populations, including older persons.**

News agencies bear corporate responsibility for the actions of their personnel. The concept of “agency” must be clearly defined and applied to ensure effective remedies for victims and to prevent future violations. When news organizations knowingly take ownership of prohibited or harmful material, they must face legal consequences to uphold basic human rights.

From a Business and Human Rights perspective, media corporations—including news agencies and digital platforms—have a responsibility under UNGPs to ensure that content procurement and distribution do not infringe on human rights by incentivizing or enabling direct participation in hostilities. When operational coordination occurs between journalists and

²⁷ European Union, *Regulation (EU) 2016/679 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data (General Data Protection Regulation)*, Art. 5(1)(a), OJ L119/1 (2016), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32016R0679>

²⁸ European Union, *Regulation (EU) 2016/679 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data (General Data Protection Regulation)*, Arts. 13–14, OJ L119/1 (2016), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32016R0679>

²⁹ Geneva Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, 12 August 1949, Art. 79; Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I), 8 June 1977, Art. 79.

³⁰ Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, *Documentary Evidence of Hamas -Al Jazeera Relations and Cooperation*, 20 October 2025, available at: <https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/documentary-evidence-of-hamas-al-jazeera-relations-and-cooperation/>

armed groups, reporting can transform from a protected activity into a channel for exacerbating violations of human rights and humanitarian law, with particularly severe consequences for older persons.

Weapon Industries

Private actors involved in the manufacture, transfer, or facilitation of weapons bear heightened responsibility when their products are used in armed conflicts, particularly where civilians are targeted. During the October 7, 2023 attacks, evidence indicates that Hamas operatives used a range of conventional and dual-use weapons (such as rockets, drones, AK-47s, hand-grenades)³¹ against civilian communities, including older persons who were disproportionately affected due to limited mobility, heightened medical needs, and increased vulnerability to severe injury. Weapons industries contributed to this harm by supplying arms, components, or dual-use technologies without adequate human rights due diligence, failing to suspend or reassess transfers despite clear indicators of risk, incompatible with IHLs³². Commercial technologies, including unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and cyber-surveillance tools³³, were reportedly adapted for military purposes to facilitate real-time targeting of communities, mapping civilian infrastructure, and identifying older persons as vulnerable targets—contributing to commission of war crimes. Despite Hamas and associated militia obtained weapons through smuggling from Egypt and local production, many of these weapons, such as sniper rifles, AK-47, anti-tank rockets and grenades, were allegedly originated in Iran, China, Russia and North Korea³⁴— highlighting failure on weapon suppliers in identifying its end destination.

Existing normative frameworks, including the UN Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)³⁵ and relevant regional instruments, impose obligations on States to assess the risk that arms transfers may facilitate serious violations of IHL or human rights and to refrain from transfers where such risk is present. Article 6 states that any transfer of conventional arms is prohibited if it would be used “*in the commission of genocide, crime against humanity, grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions of 1949, attacks directed against civilian objects and civilians protected*” (ATT, Arts. 6; ICRC, 2024)³⁶. While these instruments primarily bind States, they create indirect

³¹ Groppi, Michele, and Vasco da Cruz Amador. “*Technology and its Pivotal Role in Hamas’s Successful Attacks on Israel.*” GNET Research, 20 Oct. 2023, <https://gnet-research.org/2023/10/20/technology-and-its-pivotal-role-in-hamass-successful-attacks-on-israel/>. Accessed 29 Jan. 2026.

³² ICRC, “Arms Transfers to Parties to Armed Conflict: What the Law Says,” 2024,

<https://www.icrc.org/en/document/arms-transfers-parties-armed-conflict-what-law-says>

³³ Kerry Chávez and Ori Swed, ‘*How Hamas Innovated with Drones to Operate Like an Army*’ (Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, 1 November 2023) <https://thebulletin.org/2023/11/how-hamas-innovated-with-drones-to-operate-like-an-army/> accessed 30 January 2026.

³⁴ Associated Press. (2024, January 15). *Hamas fights with a patchwork of weapons built by Iran, China, Russia and North Korea.* **AP News.** <https://apnews.com/article/israel-hamas-war-guns-weapons-missiles-smuggling-ad9dae9dae4c48059d2a3c8e5d565daa30>

³⁵ *Arms Trade Treaty.* (2013, April 2). United Nations. https://thearmstradetreaty.org/hyper-images/file/ATT_English/ATT_English.pdf?templated=137253

³⁶ Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), Arts. 6–7; ICRC, “Arms Transfers to Parties to Armed Conflict,” 2024

obligations for private enterprises: failure to comply with national laws implementing the ATT, or to implement robust age-sensitive risk assessments and end-user monitoring, can expose companies and their personnel to criminal, civil, or administrative liability. IHL further underscores that private actors must respect and ensure respect for the law of armed conflict; where dual-use weapons or commercial technologies are foreseeably used by NSAGs such as Hamas to commit attacks on civilians, including older persons, companies are contributing to gross human rights violations and must take all feasible measures to prevent harm (UNGP, Principles 11–17; ICRC, 2024)³⁷.

IV. Gaps and Opportunities in Corporate Responsibilities towards older persons

The October 7 attacks illustrate that older persons are particularly at risk from corporate failures in conflict settings. Social media platforms, news agencies, and weapons industries alike bear a responsibility to implement age-sensitive risk assessments, exercise enhanced human rights due diligence, and prevent their products, services, or content from contributing to violations of dignity, privacy, or life. As the OHCHR report highlighted, older people are often targeted during armed conflicts, and face higher risks, due to physical limitations, lack of mobility to evacuate, lack of information, higher need for medical services, and especially when it is compounded with other intersectional characteristics, such as gender and disability³⁸. In light of these gaps, O7J urges the Independent Expert to consider corporate accountability in social media operation, news reporting, arms transfer and weapons production as a critical component of protecting older persons' rights, as they face unique vulnerability, during armed conflict and in high-risk commercial and digital environment.

In light of these findings, this submission respectfully recommends that the Independent Expert consider the following:

- (1) **First, digital and media enterprises should establish mandatory, crisis-specific protocols for the rapid takedown of harmful content and the temporary suspension of algorithmic amplification where foreseeable harm to older persons exists.** Media organizations should adopt ethical reporting standards that avoid operational coordination with NSAGs and protect the dignity, privacy, and autonomy of older persons.
- (2) **Second, social media and media corporations should ensure accountability and remedy for harm caused by violent content.** In accordance with UNGPs 13 and 17, they must sanction violations, publicly denounce harmful activity, report relevant accounts to authorities, and implement systemic reforms, including age-sensitive,

³⁷ Ibid.; UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, Principles 11–17.

³⁸ United Nations. (2025, July 18). *Older persons in armed conflict and peacebuilding: Note by the Secretary-General* (UN Doc. A/80/203). <https://docs.un.org/en/A/80/203>

trauma-informed due diligence and safeguards to prevent future violations against older persons

- (3) **Third, arms manufacturers and dual-use technology providers should suspend or condition transfers where there is a clear risk that weapons may be used against civilians, especially older persons, and incorporate age-sensitive risk assessments into their export control and end-user monitoring practices.** States and companies alike should ensure compliance with IHL and human rights obligations, including under the ATT, Wassenaar Arrangement, and relevant national legislation.
- (4) **Fourth, news agencies and journalists must uphold strict corporate and ethical responsibility in conflict settings, in line with IHLs and UNGPs.** Agencies bear responsibility for the acts of their personnel, and “agency” must be clearly defined to ensure accountability for actions that directly or indirectly contribute to hostilities. Media organizations should implement robust oversight, ethical reporting protocols, and training to prevent operational coordination with armed groups, and must sanction and publicly report violations.
- (5) **Fifth, ensure that the forthcoming international legally binding instrument on the human rights of older persons, being developed by the Open-Ended International Working Group established under HRC resolution 58/13, explicitly safeguards the protection and needs of older persons in the context of business activities, especially during armed conflicts.**

V. Conclusion

The experience of older civilians following 7 October 2023 illustrates how failures by business enterprises—including digital platforms, news agencies, and weapons producers—can directly and profoundly undermine the human rights of older persons. **These harms should not be understood as isolated incidents, but rather as manifestations of broader structural deficiencies at the intersection of technology, media, arms production, and corporate responsibility.**

This case offers a critical opportunity for the Independent Expert to highlight the necessity of re-examining business conduct through the lens of the rights, dignity, and safety of older persons, and to reinforce the importance of age-sensitive corporate responsibility within human rights frameworks.

We stand ready to provide further information, including detailed evidence relating to specific cases, and to appear before the mandate holder to provide testimony or clarification, upon invitation or request. We thank the Independent Expert for the opportunity to contribute to this important consultation.

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