

## Statement on World Elder Abuse Awareness Day 2023 from the GAROP Steering Group

### **Governments must address gaps and limitations in the international human rights framework to address elder abuse world-wide**

Violence against older persons is an unacceptable but persistent global phenomenon. It takes many different forms, occurs in all types of settings, and can be perpetrated by a wide range of different actors. These forms of violence and abuse often go unnoticed, unrecorded, and remain a taboo subject in many societies<sup>1</sup>.

This situation is fuelled by the fact that the international human rights framework has significant gaps and limitations that prevent older people from being able to fully realise and enjoy their rights. This includes support for the victims and survivors of violence and abuse<sup>2</sup>. The issue of violence, abuse and neglect has already been analysed in detail by the United Nations' (UN) Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWGA)<sup>3</sup> where older persons and many other stakeholders are consistently calling for a dedicated and comprehensive UN convention on the rights of older persons to be drafted without delay to address these deficiencies. This was reinforced by the Human Rights Council's Resolution on the human rights of older persons in October 2021<sup>4</sup>.

An older campaigner from Kenya, Elijah Mwega, spoke at our Global Rally Summit in 2022<sup>5</sup> about his disappointment when he sought help at the local police station to take an older man who had been beaten and left for dead to hospital. The officer in charge told him that if it were a child abuse case he could refer him to the court, but as it was an older person there is no legal framework to guide him in preparing the necessary documentation.

Today, on World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, we recognise and celebrate the many older people, campaigners and advocates, like Elijah, who are working tirelessly around the globe to raise awareness of elder abuse and support older people facing violence, neglect and abuse. Under the banner of the global Age With Rights campaign, campaigners are calling for a UN convention to strengthen our understanding of how to promote and protect human rights in older age and provide greater conceptual clarity and guidance about how to deal with specific violations, such as elder abuse.

In the important discussions in the Human Rights Council and the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing process this year, we urge governments to clearly acknowledge these gaps in the international human rights system and support the drafting of a new UN convention on the rights of older persons as the best way to fully address them.

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<sup>1</sup> [Violence and abuse against older persons | OHCHR](#)

<sup>2</sup> [G2223886.pdf \(un.org\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Eighth Session of the UN Open-ended Working Group on strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons](#) and [Ninth Session of the United Nations Open-ended Working Group on strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons](#)

<sup>4</sup> [G2128779.pdf \(un.org\)](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Global Rally Summit - YouTube](#)