

Financial abuse of elderly 'rampant, but invisible', says UN expert

Older people are increasingly subject to financial abuse, in many cases by their own family members, a United Nations human rights expert warned on Thursday.

"Financial [abuse of older persons](#) is rampant but largely invisible, and the problem is expected to grow dramatically with the ageing of our societies", said the UN-appointed independent expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, Rosa Kornfeld-Matte, in a statement to mark [World Elder Abuse Awareness Day](#) on 15 June.

She says most abuse goes undetected, and it is impossible to say how big the problem is, as data is scarce because of under-reporting.

"Sadly, most abusers are family members", said Ms. Kornfeld-Matte. "This is a particularly delicate matter", she added, explaining that even experienced professionals have difficulty distinguishing an unwise but legitimate financial transaction, from an exploitative one that was the result of undue influence, duress, fraud, or a lack of informed consent.

Sadly, most abusers are family members – UN expert Rosa Kornfeld-Matte

Financial abuse reflects a pattern of behaviour rather than a single event, and occurs over a period of time.

She said that older people may even tacitly acknowledge it, or feel that the perpetrator has some entitlement to their assets.

"Some older people also have a desire to compensate those who provide them with care, affection, or attention", she said.

Ms. Kornfeld-Matte urged older people to report cases of abuse to the authorities, even though they feel embarrassed or fear retaliation, including withdrawal of affection and care.

"One of the few ways to stop financial abuse of older people is to report it. If you suspect that someone you care about has been or is being abused, I can only urge you to speak up", she said.

UN rights chief calls for international inquiry into Kashmir violations

Decades of rights violations on both sides of the Line of Control in Kashmir have “claimed or ruined numerous lives” and should be the subject of a high-level international probe, the UN’s [human rights chief](#) said on Thursday.

Flagging the launch of the first UN human rights [report](#) on the disputed territory separating India and Pakistan, Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein noted his intention to ask the [Human Rights Council](#) in Geneva to set up a commission of inquiry at its next session, beginning on Monday.

The High Commissioner – whose mandate ends this summer – highlighted what he called the “chronic impunity for violations committed by security forces” and said that the political nature of the conflict had masked the “untold suffering” of millions of people.

The main focus of the 49-page report is the use of reported “excessive force” by soldiers in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, although it also examines a range of rights violations in Pakistan-Administered Kashmir.

In Indian-Administered Kashmir, the report details how large demonstrations erupted in Jammu and Kashmir two years ago after Indian security forces killed the leader of an armed group.

It notes how “excessive force” led to the deaths of an estimated 145 civilians from mid-2016 to April this year.

Victims’ lack of access to justice remains a key challenge in Jammu and Kashmir, the report from the UN human rights office, [OHCHR](#), continues.

It details how bespoke legislation gives security personnel “virtual immunity” against legal redress unless the Indian government authorizes it, and says that “there has not been a single prosecution” in the nearly 30 years that the Armed Forces (Jammu and Kashmir) Special Powers Act has been in force.

This “almost total impunity” has also hindered inquiries into enforced or voluntary disappearances, the report continues, citing allegations of mass graves in the state and the alleged mass rape of 23 women by soldiers in Kunan-Poshpora nearly three decades ago.

Turning to Pakistan-Administered Kashmir, the OHCHR report describes rights violations there as being “of a different calibre or magnitude”.

It details restrictions on freedom of expression and people’s right to peaceful assembly in two territories – Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and in

Gilgit-Baltistan – and expresses concern at the “very broad definition of terrorism” amid reports that hundreds of people have been detained under Pakistan’s anti-terrorism legislation in Gilgit-Baltistan alone.

Any resolution of the political situation in Pakistan-administered Kashmir and Indian-administered Kashmir “must entail a commitment to end the cycles of violence and ensure accountability for past and current abuses by all parties”, Zeid said.

FROM THE FIELD: Finding refuge in the ‘beautiful game’

Teenage refugees from East Africa have discovered that participating in the ‘beautiful game’ as football is often referred to, can level the playing field and help them to integrate into new homes and new cultures.

The teenagers are part of a team based in Utah in the United States. Their participation in the sport allows them to meet other Americans helping them to make friends and integrate into their new communities.

According to the UN migration agency, [IOM](#), there are currently over 65 million refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced people around the world.

The power of football or soccer to inspire and unite people globally is due to be played out in the World Cup which begins in Russia on Thursday.

The host of the “A Way Home Together,” a podcast which was inspired by a UN campaign to promote safety, dignity and respect for refugees and migrants travelled to Utah to speak to the young men.

For more click here: <http://features.iom.int/stories/true-colours/>

UNICEF urges all countries to provide ‘Super Dads’ with paid leave

Almost two-thirds of the world’s children under the age of one live in countries where fathers are not legally entitled to any paid paternity leave, according to a new analysis by the United Nations Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)).

There are 92 countries which lack national policies ensuring that new fathers get adequate paid time off, to spend with their newborn babies.

“Positive and meaningful interaction with mothers and fathers from the very beginning, helps to shape children’s brain growth and development for life, making them healthier and happier, and increasing their ability to learn,” said UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore.

It’s all of our responsibility to enable them to fill this role,” she added.

Evidence suggests that when fathers bond with their infants, they are more likely to play an active role in their child’s development. Research also suggests that when children positively interact with their fathers, they have better psychological health, self-esteem and long-term satisfaction in life.

UNICEF is urging governments to implement national family-friendly policies that support early childhood development, including paid paternity and maternity leave, free pre-primary education, and paid breastfeeding breaks.

Earlier this year, UNICEF modernized its approach to parental leave provisions, with up to 16 weeks of paid leave for paternity across all of its offices worldwide – the first UN agency to extend the benefit, beyond the standard four weeks.

“We cannot be ‘For Every Child,’ if we are not also ‘For Every Parent.’ We have to ask more of governments and more of employers if we’re going to give fathers and mothers the time and resources they need to nurture their children, particularly during the earliest years of a child’s life,” said Ms. Fore.

Around the world, momentum for family-friendly policies is growing. However, with nearly 90 million children living in countries without paid paternity leave, much work remains to be done, said UNICEF.

The new analysis forms part of UNICEF’s Super Dads campaign, now in its second year, which aims to break down barriers and allow fathers to play an active role in their children’s’ development.

The campaign is also recognizing Father’s Day at this time, which is celebrated across more than 80 countries during June, and focuses on the importance of love, play, protection and good nutrition for the healthy development of young children’s brains.

[General Assembly adopts text urging](#)

greater protection for Palestinians, and deploring Israel's 'excessive' use of force

In an emergency meeting on Wednesday, the United Nations General Assembly adopted an Arab-sponsored resolution calling for greater protection for Palestinians, and deploring any use of “excessive, disproportionate and indiscriminate” force by the Israeli military against Palestinian civilians, particularly in Gaza.

The emergency session of the 193-member Assembly, came about following weeks of violence along the border of the Gaza Strip – the Palestinian enclave blockaded by Israel – where hundreds of thousands of Palestinians participated in “the Great March of Return” protests, beginning at the end of March.

More than 120 Palestinian civilians were reportedly killed by Israeli forces while participating in the protests against Israel's years-long blockade.

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 120 in favour, 8 against, with 45 abstentions. A US amendment which condemned the role played in Gaza by the Hamas extremist group, which controls the enclave, was voted on first.

After several rounds of procedural voting, and delays over tallying votes, it secured the support of 62 countries, with 58 against; coming up short of the two-thirds majority support needed.

Assembly President Miroslav Lajčák convened the meeting, following a formal request from Algeria and Turkey, in their respective capacities as Chair of the Arab Group and Chair of the Summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

After a resolution on Palestinian civilian protection failed to pass in the UN Security Council on 1 June due to a US veto, Wednesday's identical resolution in the Assembly was not subject to the same rules as exist in the Council.



UN Photo/Evan Schneider

Ambassador Nikki R. Haley of the United States addresses General Assembly on the “Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory”.

Introducing the amendment before voting, the US Ambassador to the UN, Nikki Haley, said that “the nature of this resolution clearly demonstrates that politics is driving the day.”

“It is totally one-sided. It makes not one mention of Hamas, who routinely initiates violence in Gaza. Such one-sided resolutions at the UN do nothing to advance peace between Israel and the Palestinians,” she said.

Also prior to voting, the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the UN, Riyad Mansour, said that “our decision to approach to the Assembly was prompted by the Security Council’s failure to act due to the veto cast on 1 June by a permanent member.”

“We therefore firmly reject the bad-faith attempt to insert an amendment that would radically unbalance the text and shift the Assembly’s focus away from the core objective of protecting civilians and upholding international law,” he said.



UN Photo/Evan Schneider

Riyad Mansour, Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the UN, addresses the resumed tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly.

The text adopted “deplores the use of any excessive, disproportionate and indiscriminate force by the Israeli forces against Palestinian civilians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and particularly in the Gaza Strip, including the use of live ammunition against civilian protesters, including children, as well as medical personnel and journalists, and expresses its grave concern at the loss of innocent lives.”

It also “demands that Israel, the occupying Power, refrain from such actions and fully abide by its legal obligations and responsibilities” under the fourth Geneva Convention on protecting civilians in times of war.

It also requests that the Secretary-General, within 60 days, present his “proposals on ways and means for ensuring the safety, protection and well-being of the Palestinian civilian population under Israeli occupation, including “recommendations regarding an international protection mechanism.”

The text also “deplores the firing of rockets from the Gaza Strip against Israeli civilian areas,” but does not single out Hamas as being responsible for such launches.

The US amendment sought to add to the Arab-sponsored text, a paragraph, by which the Assembly would “condemn Hamas for repeatedly firing rockets into Israel and for inciting violence along the boundary fence, thereby putting civilians at risk.”

It would have also demanded that “Hamas cease all violent activity and provocative actions,” and condemned the use of resources in Gaza to construct military infrastructure, including tunnels to infiltrate Israel and equipment to launch rockets into civilian areas, saying that such funds should be used

to address the critical needs of the civilian population.

Briefing journalists earlier in the day, Spokesperson for the President of the General Assembly, Brenden Varma, said that if the resolution passed, it would represent an "important expression of political will" and an "important recommendation by the General Assembly." However, it would not be binding in the same way as a Security Council resolution.