**Expert Workshop on Disinformation**
-
Thursday 12 June 2025, 15:00 – 18:00 CET

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ONLINE

**Registration** **link:**

[UN-OHCHR Workshop review the methods used to disseminate disinformation and to promote tools and approaches to counter these challenges while protecting and reinforcing human rights standards (12 June 2025): Overview · Indico.UN](https://indico.un.org/event/1017921/)

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**CONCEPT NOTE**

1. **INTRODUCTION**
2. The Human Rights Council, in its resolution 55/10 on the “role of States in countering the negative impact of disinformation on the enjoyment and realization of human rights” of 5 April 2024, has requested the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to convene, before the fifty-ninth session of the Human Rights Council, a half-day expert workshop to “review the methods used to disseminate disinformation and to promote tools and approaches to counter these challenges while protecting and reinforcing human rights standards”.[[1]](#footnote-2)
3. **BACKGROUND**
4. The General Assembly and the Human Rights Council have passed resolutions underscoring the critical importance while countering disinformation of safeguarding human rights — particularly the rights to freedom of expression and access to information.[[2]](#footnote-3)
5. The United Nations (UN) Secretary-General also published several key reports exploring the complexities of disinformation.[[3]](#footnote-4) Among them, the report titled "Countering Disinformation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms"[[4]](#footnote-5) outlines the challenges disinformation poses, reviews relevant international legal frameworks, and examines the actions taken by States and technology companies to combat it. The report also underscores the vital roles of societal resilience and media literacy in effectively addressing disinformation.
6. The Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression similarly addressed the threat disinformation poses to human rights, democratic institutions, and development processes. The Rapporteur’s reports call for multidimensional, multistakeholder strategies firmly rooted in international human rights law.[[5]](#footnote-6)
7. Both the Secretary-General and the Special Rapporteur emphasize that, while disinformation can severely undermine the exercise of rights, overly simplistic or heavy-handed approaches risk censoring legitimate expression protected under international law, ultimately exacerbating public mistrust. Rather than imposing restrictions on freedom of expression, States are encouraged to promote and protect this right by maximizing transparency and fostering an independent, pluralistic media landscape.
8. The UN has also launched several global initiatives to address disinformation. A key milestone was the adoption of the [Global Principles for Information Integrity](https://www.un.org/en/information-integrity/global-principles) in 2014. These principles, developed through wide-ranging consultations, aim to counter the harms of misinformation, disinformation, and hate speech by promoting trust, resilience, media pluralism, and transparency.
9. In September 2024, during the Summit of the Future, UN Member States adopted the [Global Digital Compact](https://www.un.org/digital-emerging-technologies/global-digital-compact). This agreement includes commitments to uphold information integrity and enhance international cooperation to address disinformation in line with international law. States pledged to promote diverse and resilient information ecosystems, expand access to reliable information, and work with the UN to assess the impact of disinformation on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Global Digital Compact also urges companies and social media platforms to increase the transparency and accountability of their systems, empower users, and support researchers with access to data to build an evidence base for best practices in combating online disinformation and hate speech.
10. Finally, the UN continues to promote media and information literacy as a key tool for empowering individuals to identify and debunk disinformation. This includes fostering critical thinking skills and providing accessible resources to help people recognize and resist false or misleading information.
11. **EXPERT CONSULTATION**
12. **Goal:**
13. As States, technology companies, media outlets, civil society organizations, and international bodies continue to develop and refine strategies to address disinformation in accordance with human rights standards, the expert workshop will serve as a platform for dialogue and exchange. Participants will reflect on lessons learned, explore context-specific experiences, and analyse evidence from efforts aimed at mitigating the impact of disinformation and advancing information integrity.
14. The discussions and outcomes of the workshop will contribute to the preparation of the summary report requested under Human Rights Council resolution 55/10.[[6]](#footnote-7) This report, to be drafted by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, will be presented to the Human Rights Council at its sixty-first session in March 2026, and will inform future actions and policymaking in this critical area.
15. **Methodology:**
16. To accommodate financial limitations and maximize inclusive participation, the expert workshop will be conducted virtually and will take place exclusively in English.
17. Each session will be introduced by experts, who will frame the discussion around key themes. A moderator will then guide an open dialogue, inviting contributions from participants, including representatives of States, international and regional organizations, civil society, the private sector, and other relevant stakeholders.
18. **Sessions:**
19. H.E. Mr. Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk, the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva, will open the expert workshop on behalf of Member States that sponsored Human Rights Council resolution 55/10. OHCHR will also give introductory remarks. The workshop will be organized into four sessions:

***Session 1: Update from the Advisory Committee on its study on the impact of disinformation on human rights, followed by a presentation of the special rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression***

1. In line with operative paragraph 10 of resolution 55/10, the Advisory Committee has been requested to present an oral update on the preparation of its study on the impact of disinformation on the enjoyment and realization of human rights. This update will be delivered by Patrycja Sasnal, the Committee member leading the study.
2. The Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression will also present the work she has undertaken on disinformation, especially in her reports on “gendered disinformation and its implications for the right to freedom of expression” (A/78/288), “disinformation and freedom of opinion and expression during armed conflicts” (A/77/288), and “disinformation and freedom of opinion and expression” (A/HRC/47/25).

***Session 2: Lessons learned from regulatory approaches to disinformation and content governance***

1. This session will explore insights gained from regulatory frameworks and policy initiatives designed to combat disinformation and promote greater transparency in the governance of digital content. Participants will reflect on a range of guiding questions, including but not limited to:
* What regulatory models have recently emerged across different jurisdictions? Do these models align with international human rights standards? What lessons can be drawn from these experiences?
* How can transparency requirements be balanced with freedom of expression?
* What role can independent oversight mechanisms play in ensuring accountability?

***Session 3: Participatory approaches and fact-checking as responses to disinformation***

1. In this session, attention will turn to participatory and community-driven responses to disinformation, with a focus on fact-checking practices. The discussion will address topics such as:
* What are the strengths and limitations of fact-checking initiatives?
* How can media and information literacy complement participatory efforts?
* What best practices have emerged from collaborations among civil society, media, and technology platforms?

***Session 4: The way forward – enhancing tools and approaches to counter disinformation***

1. Drawing on the discussions throughout the workshop, OHCHR will lead the closing session, which will identify key recommendations and explore ways to improve existing tools and approaches to effectively address disinformation while ensuring alignment with international human rights standards.
1. Operative 10 of resolution 55/10. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Including Assembly resolution 76/227 of 24 December 2021, on countering disinformation for the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and Council resolutions 44/12 of 16 July 2020 and 50/15 of 8 July 2022, on freedom of opinion and expression, 47/16 of 13 July 2021, on the promotion, protection and enjoyment of human rights on the Internet, and 49/21 of 1 April 2022, on the role of States in countering the negative impact of disinformation on the enjoyment and realization of human rights. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. See: <https://www.un.org/en/countering-disinformation>. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. A/77/287. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. A/78/288, A/77/288, A/HRC/47/25. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Operative paragraph 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)