**56thsession of the Human Rights Council**

**Quadrennial panel discussion on promoting human rights   
through sport and the Olympic ideal**

***Theme: Promoting inclusiveness in and through sports***

*Concept note (as of 25 June 2024)*

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| **Date and venue:** | **Monday, 1 July 2024, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.**  **Room XX, Palais des Nations, Geneva**  *(will be webcast and archived on* [*https://webtv.un.org*](https://webtv.un.org)*)* |
| **Objectives:** | Sports speak a universal language - one that transcends borders and backgrounds. Fair play, teamwork and perseverance. These principles resonate far beyond the confines of any stadium. Sports can be a catalyst for human rights. The arenas and fields where athletes showcase their talents are also platforms to champion equality, inclusion and dignity. In celebrating the potential of sports to promote human rights, we acknowledge that the journey is not without its challenges. Discrimination, inequality and exclusion can persist, even in the world of sports. Sports should be a space where every individual - regardless of their background - can participate and thrive.  A few weeks ahead of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, this panel discussion will offer an opportunity to identify good practices, challenges and opportunities towards promoting and achieving inclusiveness in and through sports for all:   * Take stock of the progress made so far in leveraging sport and the Olympic ideal for the promotion of equality, inclusiveness and non-discrimination of any kind; * How to ensure that future Olympic Games and major sport events will be a safe environment for all, without discrimination of any kind; * How to foster a comprehensive and collective effort in the fight against racism and discrimination, as well as the prevention of sexual and other forms of exploitation or abuse, through the direct engagement of those directly affected – athletes, communities, workers, volunteers and officials, journalists and fans. |
| **Chair:** | **H.E. Mr. Omar Zniber**, President of the Human Rights Council |
| **Opening statements:** | **Mr. Volker Türk**, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights  **Mr. Thomas Bach**, President of the International Olympic Committee |
| **Panellists:** | * **Ms. Alexandra Xanthaki**, Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights * **Mr. Yiech Pur Biel**, Olympic Refuge Foundation Board Member and Member of the first Refugee Olympic Team Rio 2016 * **Ms. Najlah Imad Al-Dayyeni**, Table Tennis Paralympian in Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020 and Paris 2024 * **Ms. Ginous “Gigi” Alford**, Director of Sport and Human Rights at the World Players Association |
| **Outcome:** | This thematic discussion is expected to enable States and other relevant stakeholders to gain a better understanding of the issues reflected in resolution 43/18 in order to further the Council’s engagement in this area. |
| **Mandate:** | In its resolution 37/18, the Human Rights Council decided to incorporate into its programme of work a thematic panel discussion with regard to promoting human rights through sport and the Olympic ideal, to be held once every four years at the session of the Human Rights Council preceding the Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games. Greece, the penholder of the traditional resolution and on behalf of the core group of the main sponsors of the resolution, proposed in [a letter](https://hrcmeetings.ohchr.org/PresidencyBureau/BureauRegionalGroupsCorrespondence/Correspondence/Letter%20from%20the%20Permanent%20Representative%20of%20Greece%20concerning%20the%20quadrennial%20thematic%20panel%20discussion%20on%20promoting%20human%20rights%20through%20sport%20and%20the%20Olympic%20ideal.pdf) to the President of the Human Rights Council on 31 January 2024 that the theme of the 2024 quadrennial panel discussion be “Promoting inclusiveness in and through sports”. |
| **Background:** | According to the policy position by United Nations special procedure mandate holders in relation to the protection of human rights in sport without discrimination of 31 October 2023, the practice of sport without discrimination of any kind is conceived as a human right under article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, combined with the principle of non-discrimination recognized in article 2 of the twin International Covenants, on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.  It is further reflected in the substantive work of the United Nations human rights mechanisms, including the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee) and in the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. It is also a cornerstone of the foundational documents of many bodies, including the World Athletics (WA) Constitution and the Olympic Charter.  The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has recognized that sporting bodies have human rights responsibilities and it is therefore fundamental that they consider any form of discrimination as incompatible with the sports movement. States also have a corresponding obligation to regulate the protection of human rights in sport and to provide access to efficient and effective legal remedies for cases of discrimination or other human rights abuses by sporting bodies or private actors.  The Human Rights Council has considered the issue of sports and human rights in particular in its resolutions 13/27 of 26 March 2010, 18/23 of 30 September 2011, 24/1 of 26 September 2013, 26/18 of 26 June 2014 and 27/8 of 25 September 2014, 31/23 of 24 March 2016, 37/18 of 23 March 2018, 40/5 of 21 March 2019, 43/18 of 22 June 2020, 49/12 of 31 March 2022 and 54/25 of 12 October 2023.  The Human Rights Council has acknowledged the potential of sport as a universal language that contributes to education about the values of respect, dignity, diversity, equality, tolerance and fairness and as a means to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and to promote social inclusion for all. It has further acknowledged the fundamental principles of the Olympic Charter, in particular principle 4, which states that every individual must have the possibility of practising sport, without discrimination of any kind, and principle 6, which states that the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in the Charter should be secured for all, without discrimination of any kind. The Human Rights Council Advisory Committee in its 2015 report on sport and the Olympic ideal stated that “in sport, any type of discrimination is prohibited, such as those on the basis of race, colour, gender, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status, or against national minorities. Human rights and the Olympic ideal envisage a society without any discrimination.”  The developments in the Human Rights Council are mirrored by a strengthening of human rights obligations in the world of sport, as reflected, for example, in the New Strategic Framework on Human Rights of the International Olympic Committee, published in 2022, in 2017 FIFA’s Human Rights Policy and the Paris 2024 Olympic Games Human Rights Strategy. More and more mega sporting event organizers present similar policies to guide their events management and ensure respect for people’s rights in their operations and activities throughout the life cycle of the events. |
| **Format:** | The panel discussion will be limited to two hours. The opening statements and initial presentations by the panellists will be followed by a two-part interactive discussion and by conclusions from the panellists. A maximum of one hour will be set aside for podium interventions, including the opening statements, panellists’ presentations, and their responses to questions and concluding remarks. The remaining hour will be reserved for two segments of interventions from the floor, with each segment consisting of interventions from 14 States or observers, 2 national human rights institutions and 4 non-governmental organizations. Each speaker will have 1.5 minutes to raise issues and to ask panellists questions. The panellists will respond to questions and comments during the remaining time available.  The list of speakers for the discussion will be established through the online inscription system and, as per practice, statements by high-level dignitaries and groups of States will be moved to the beginning of the list. Delegates who could not take the floor due to time constraints will be able to upload their statements on the online system to be posted on the HRC Extranet. Interpretation will be provided in the six United Nations official languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish). |
| **Accessibility:** | In an effort to render the Human Rights Council more accessible to persons with disabilities and to promote their full participation in the work of the Council on an equal basis with others, the panel discussion will be webcast and made accessible. International sign interpretation and real-time captioning in English will be provided and webcast. Participants can access live English captioning on the Stream Text web page (<https://www.streamtext.net/player?event=CFI-UNOG>) during the event itself. Hearing loops are available for collection from the Secretariat desk. Oral statements may be embossed in Braille from any of the six official languages of the United Nations, upon request and following the procedure described in the *Accessibility guide to the Human Rights Council for persons with disabilities* (<https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/accessibility>). |
| **Related documents:** | [Human Rights Council resolution 37/18](https://undocs.org/a/hrc/res/37/18) of 23 March 2018 on promoting human rights through sport and the Olympic ideal  [Human Rights Council resolution 43/18](https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/RES/43/18) of 22 June 2020 on promoting human rights through sport and the Olympic ideal  [Human Rights Council resolution 54/25](https://undocs.org/a/hrc/res/54/25) of 12 October 2023 on a world of sports free from racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance  [General Assembly resolution 78/10](https://undocs.org/A/RES/78/10) of 21 November 2023 on building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal  Human Rights Council Advisory Committee, Final report on the possibilities of using sport and the Olympic ideal to promote human rights for all and to strengthen universal respect for them (2015, [A/HRC/30/50](https://undocs.org/A/HRC/30/50))  Intersection of race and gender discrimination in sport - Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (2020, [A/HRC/44/26](https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/ahrc4426-intersection-race-and-gender-discrimination-sport-report-united))  United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, [Colour? What Colour? Report on the fight against discrimination and racism in football](http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002357/235721e.pdf) (Paris, 2015)  [Report of the 2018 Social Forum](https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/reports/report-2018-social-forum)  [Policy position](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/sexualorientation/iesogi/2023-10-31-stm-sogi-policy-en.pdf) by United Nations special procedure mandate holders in relation to the protection of human rights in sport without discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex characteristics (31 October 2023)  International Olympic Committee, [IOC Strategic Framework on Human Rights](https://stillmed.olympics.com/media/Documents/Beyond-the-Games/Human-Rights/IOC-Strategic-Framework-on-Human-Rights.pdf) (September 2022)  [Fédération Internationale de Football Association, FIFA’s Human Rights Policy](https://media.business-humanrights.org/media/documents/files/documents/FIFAs_Human_Rights_Policy_0.pdf) (2017)  [Centre for Sport and Human Rights, Convergence 2025 Strategic Plan (2021-2025)](https://www.sporthumanrights.org/library/convergence-2025/)  [Paris 2024 Human Rights Strategy](https://www.paris2024.org/fr/strategie-droits-homme/) |

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