**50th session of the Human Rights Council  
High-level panel discussion on countering the negative impact of disinformation on the enjoyment and realization of human rights***Concept note (as of 28 June 2022)*

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| **Date and venue:** | **Tuesday, 28 June 2022, 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. (UTC+2) Room XX, Palais des Nations, Geneva and online platform (Zoom)** *(will be broadcast live and archived on* [*https://media.un.org/en/webtv*](https://media.un.org/en/webtv)*)* |
| **Objectives:** | This high-level panel discussion will be the first opportunity for the Human Rights Council to focus on the role of States in countering the negative impact of disinformation on the enjoyment and realization of human rights and ensuring a human rights-based response. The panel discussion will gather high-level speakers who will discuss policies and actions taken to counter disinformation and propose recommendations on the best ways to address this phenomenon from a human rights-based perspective. They will share their experiences on the importance of protecting the rights to freedom of expression and to access information, while emphasizing the need for multidimensional and multi-stakeholder responses that are in compliance with international human rights law. |
| **Chair:** | **H.E. Mr. Federico Villegas**,President of the Human Rights Council |
| **Opening statement:** | **Ms. Michelle Bachelet**, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights |
| **Panellists:** | * **Ms. Irene Khan**, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression * **Ms. Julie Owono,** Executive Director of the Content Policy and Society Lab at Stanford University, member of Facebook/Meta’s independent Oversight Board (*video statement*) * **Ms. Agustina Del Campo**, Director of the Center for Studies on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information (CELE) and Vice-President of the Global Network Initiative (GNI) (*video statement*) * **Ms. Kate Jones**, Associate Fellow, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House (*video statement*) |
| **Outcome:** | The high-level panel discussion will provide the Council with an opportunity to discuss laws and practice that seek to address the negative impact of disinformation on the enjoyment and realization of human rights. Open to States, members of civil society and the private sector, United Nations experts and other stakeholders, the panel will also seek to identify a human rights-based response to disinformation, while highlighting challenges, best practices and lessons learned in this area. A summary report of the panel will be prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to be presented at the Council’s 52nd session. |
| **Mandate:** | In its [resolution 49/21](https://undocs.org/A/HRC/res/49/21), the Human Rights Council decided to convene, at its fiftieth session, a high-level panel discussion on countering the negative impact of disinformation on the enjoyment and realization of human rights and ensuring a human rights-based response, open to the participation of States, members of civil society and the private sector, United Nations experts and other stakeholders, to identify the challenges and to share best practices and lessons learned, and to make the panel discussion fully accessible to persons with disabilities. The Council also requested the OHCHR to prepare a summary report on the above-mentioned panel discussion and to present it to the Human Rights Council at its fifty-second session. |
| **Format:** | The annual debate will be limited to two hours. The opening statement and initial presentations by the panellists will be followed by a two-part interactive discussion and conclusions from the panellists. A maximum of one hour will be set aside for the podium, which will cover the opening statement, 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 12 States or observers, 1 national human rights institution and 2 non-governmental organizations. Each speaker will have two minutes to raise issues and to ask panellists questions. 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 unable to 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. |
| **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 interactive debate will be webcast and made accessible. International sign interpretation and real-time captioning in English will be provided. During the event itself, participants can access live English captioning on the StreamText web page (<https://www.streamtext.net/player?event=CFI-UNOG>). 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/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/Accessibility.aspx>). |
| **Background:** | On 1 April 2022, the Human Rights Council adopted [resolution 49/21](https://undocs.org/A/HRC/res/49/21) on the role of States in countering the negative impact of disinformation on the enjoyment and realization of human rights, the first resolution on this topic adopted by the Council. It was preceded on 24 December 2021 by the adoption of General Assembly [resolution 76/227](https://undocs.org/A/res/76/227) on countering disinformation for the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.  Modern-day disinformation has far-reaching negative impact on the enjoyment of human rights. Interacting with political, social and economic grievances, disinformation can undermine trust in public debates that are essential for the effectiveness of public health and electoral processes, among others, and can be particularly harmful in times of emergency, crisis and armed conflict. Disinformation may also be utilized by States and state-sponsored actors as part of hybrid influence operations that exploit and undermine the freedom of societies, and can accompany serious violations of international law. At the same time, several laws and policies to counter disinformation adopted by States in the past few years have imposed undue restrictions to freedom of expression and, in some cases, already used against civil society actors in general, particularly undermining the work of human rights defenders and journalists. As emphasized by the Special Rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression, disinformation is problematic, but so too are the responses of States and companies**.** Council resolution 49/21 emphasizes that countering disinformation should not be used as a pretext to restrict the enjoyment and realization of human rights or to justify censorship, including through vague and overly broad laws criminalizing disinformation. According to the resolution, countering disinformation from a human rights-based perspective will require that States refrain from conducting or sponsoring disinformation campaigns, promote access to diverse and reliable information, reaffirm their commitment to media diversity and independence, and ensure the protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression. |
| **Background documents:** | * [Human Rights Council resolution 49/21](http://undocs.org/A/HRC/RES/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 * [General Assembly resolution 76/227](http://undocs.org/A/RES/76/227) of 24 December 2021 on countering disinformation for the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms * Report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression on disinformation and freedom of opinion and expression ([A/HRC/47/25](https://undocs.org/A/HRC/47/25)) * [Joint declaration](https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/6/8/302796.pdf) on Freedom of Expression and “Fake News”, Disinformation and Propaganda by United Nations and regional experts on freedom of expression |