



**UNHRC**

**"Safeguarding Against and Ensuring  
Accountability for Human Rights Violations  
by Non-State Actors"**

## I. Committee Background

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) was established in 2006 by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). It is made up of 47 member states elected for three-year terms and receives support from the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The main purpose of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) is to strengthen the global promotion and protection of human rights. It works to address violations wherever they occur and to recommend practical ways for governments to improve their human rights practices. The Council carries out this mission by adopting resolutions, creating fact-finding missions and commissions of inquiry, reviewing each member state's human rights record through the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), issuing reports, and providing guidance to governments around the world. These tools help highlight violations, provide technical assistance, and apply pressure on governments to improve their human rights practices. The Council goes over human rights records of UN member states to identify areas for improvement. Special Procedures are independent experts appointed by the UNHRC to observe, advise, and report on human rights, either globally by theme or within specific countries. This allows the recognition of human rights by the global community for all people.



## II. Introduction to the Topic

In recent years, non-state actors have developed a substantial influence in global events, often having power that matches or even exceeds that of governments. These actors include armed insurgent groups, multinational companies, terrorist companies, private security companies, and even digital platforms. While these organizations do not legally represent governments, their actions often have serious human rights consequences. From forced labor in corporate supply chains to atrocities committed by militias and extremists organizations, NSAs are becoming more central about arguments in responsibility and overall justice.

### **Accountability Gaps for Non-State Actors**

Laws about human rights often emphasize the responsibility of governments, who are signatories to international treaties such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the Geneva Conventions. However, this state centered framework leaves an important gap, how can the international community hold non-state actors accountable when they commit atrocities somewhat equivalent in severity to those prosecuted under international law, yet they remain outside of being able to be brought to justice.



For example, armed groups in areas of conflict, such as the Taliban in Afghanistan, al-Shabaab in Somalia, and rebel forces in the Democratic Republic of Congo, frequently violate human rights, including extrajudicial killings, sexual violence, and recruitment of

child soldiers. Corporations, too, can contribute to atrocities by engaging in exploitative labor practices, creating hazardous working conditions, or causing environmental damage that endangers local populations. The United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), adopted in 2011 were an important step towards closing this gap by emphasizing the corporate responsibility to respect human rights and the need for appropriate reparations for victims.



## **Emerging Challenges from Private and Digital Non-State Actors**

At the same time, the rise of private military and security companies, and digital NSAs (such as social media platforms that may unintentionally facilitate hate speech, extremist recruiting, or human trafficking) has complicated the global human rights landscape. These organizations sometimes operate across countries, making accountability especially difficult.

## **Strengthening Accountability for Non-State Actors**

As the impact of non-state actors grows, the international community has a pressing challenge, which is establishing clear frameworks for protecting human rights and ensuring accountability is applied the same throughout NSAs. This includes increasing inter-state cooperation, strengthening international legal institutions, and encouraging responsible corporate and technical practices. Addressing this issue is very important to addressing current accountability gaps and ensuring that everyone is protected from human rights violations, regardless of who commits them.

### III. Essential Questions / Key Issues

1. The growing power and influence of non-state actors in global governance.
2. What kinds of human rights violations are non-state actors most likely to commit or facilitate?

This helps identify the main types of abuses, such as exploitation, discrimination, or violence, that occur under their influence.

3. Weak or absent state regulation and oversight.
4. Why do such violations often occur outside effective state control?

Understanding the reasons—like weak governance, corruption, or conflict—can reveal gaps in state authority and accountability.

5. Lack of enforceable legal frameworks to regulate non-state entities.
6. Do national laws provide clear mechanisms for holding non-state actors accountable?

This question examines whether domestic legal systems can effectively punish or prevent abuses by private or armed groups.

7. Threats and violence against activists and journalists.
8. Are enforcement institutions—such as courts or human rights commissions—effective and independent?

It looks at whether justice systems are capable of acting fairly and without political interference.

9. Need for community-based monitoring mechanisms.
10. How can civil society, media, and local communities help monitor and report abuses?

This explores how grassroots action and public awareness can strengthen oversight and promote accountability.

### IV. Countries List

1. Republic of Angola
2. Republic of Burundi
3. People's Republic of China
4. Republic of Colombia



5. Democratic Republic of the Congo
6. French Republic
7. Republic of India
8. Republic of Indonesia
9. Republic of Iraq
10. Lao People's Democratic Republic
11. Republic of Lebanon
12. Republic of Mali
13. United Mexican States
14. Republic of Mozambique
15. Republic of the Union of Myanmar
16. Islamic Republic of Pakistan
17. Russian Federation
18. Federal Republic of Somalia
19. Syrian Arab Republic
20. Republic of Tajikistan
21. Republic of Uganda
22. United Kingdom of Great Britain & Northern Ireland
23. United States of America
24. Republic of Uzbekistan
25. Republic of Yemen

## V. Sources

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