

# THE ROLE OF SPORTS IN COUNTERING HATE SPEECH



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United Nations  
Office on Genocide Prevention  
and the Responsibility to Protect

# THE ROLE OF SPORTS IN COUNTERING HATE SPEECH

*APRIL 2023*

*Compilation of statements as  
delivered at the United Nations  
event marking 9 December 2022:  
the International Day of  
Commemoration and Dignity of the  
Victims of Genocide and of the  
Prevention of this Crime*



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON

GENOCIDE PREVENTION AND THE  
RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT



**ERADICATE<sup>SM</sup>**  
**HATE**  
SPORTS WORKING GROUP

**On 9 December 2022, the United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect held an event marking the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime, as established by the UN General Assembly resolution 69/323 of 29 September 2015.**

**The event, held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, was dedicated to the role of sport in countering hate speech and championing the prevention of atrocity crimes. The event launched the Plan of Action to Counter Hate Speech through Engagement with Sports, [the GAME PLAN](#), developed by the United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect in collaboration with the [Eradicate Hate Global Summit Sports Working Group](#). The document provides recommendations for action to identify and combat hate speech and promote positive messages through outreach initiatives, identification of success stories, and comprehensive training.**

**The booklet in front of you compiles the statements made on this occasion.**

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**Remarks by the President of the United Nations  
General Assembly  
Mr. Csaba Kőrösi**



This Day was born out of the General Assembly's desire to ensure that "never again" would a person face the horrors of genocide. And out of the GA's desire to honor those who continue to suffer because, unfortunately, "never again" has become "again and again".

Today we also pay tribute to the people who helped to create, in 1948, the Genocide Convention. Adopted in the aftermath of the Holocaust and the Second World War, it was the first human rights treaty adopted by the General Assembly.

Governments have the primary responsibility to prevent genocide but advocating for the world's most vulnerable is our collective responsibility.

As was announced, today's event is dedicated to the role of sports in promoting peace and inclusion. Sports have changed a lot since the time of ancient Greece.

The events have lost their religious dimensions of comparing the human achievements to select the best performance and offer it to God, but still preserved that sport is about coming together to work towards the same goal, and compare the achievements in a peaceful and noble manner in accordance with agreed rules.

In sports everyone speaks the same language, across boundaries, cultures and religions. Sports can develop a sense of understanding and awareness of diversity, it can combat stereotypes and hate speech.

Athletes are among the most influential people in the world – giving a voice to the vulnerable people who don't have one. Athletes have been symbols of transformation and inclusion for decades.

**My message to the captains and athletes – you are role models for today's youth. Young people who are most exposed to extremism and radicalism. Your positive example teaches them rules, discipline and teamwork. You can educate them as nobody else can.**

Sports were born out of respect, devotion, and human virtue. Let us not forget about it.

We still need to do more to integrate a common approach to use sports to fight hate online and offline. I count on your commitment to advancing that important cause.

Before concluding, I want to acknowledge today's keynote speaker, Ms. Laura Ellsworth, for her work on the Eradicate Hate Global Summit as well as our moderator, Ms. Michele Rosenthal for her inspiring efforts in this field.

They both stand for the message of Nelson Mandela: "No one is born hating another person. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love".

**Remarks by the United Nations Secretary-General  
António Guterres  
as delivered by the Chef de Cabinet**

Today we remember and pay tribute to victims and survivors of genocides across the world.

It is a day to reexamine our collective failure to prevent this crime in the past, and redouble prevention efforts for the present and for the future.

Seventy-four years after the adoption of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the threat of genocide remains present. Discrimination and hate speech, early warning signs of genocide, are on the rise everywhere.

We must do more to promote strong political leadership and resolute action against these dangerous trends. We must do more to live up to our commitment to liberate humanity from the scourge of genocide. I therefore thank you for coming together in this deeply meaningful way and on such a timely initiative.

The Plan of Action to Combat Hate Speech through Engagement with Sports – known as the Game Plan – is the product of two years of consultations, led by my Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide and the UN-Summit Sports Working Group, which began at the Eradicate Hate Summit in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The Working Group is composed of representatives of various sport leagues in the United States and beyond.

The Game Plan was born out of intense pain.

Pittsburgh witnessed the deadliest anti-Semitic attack in United States history when a gunman who had posted anti-Semitic and anti-refugee hate speech online killed eleven people, wounding more, including police officers, at the Tree of Life Synagogue. In Buffalo, New York, a gunman who had previously posted racist hate speech online killed ten people and wounded three in a predominantly Black neighborhood of Buffalo, New York.

Hate speech is one of the most common warning signs of atrocity crimes – that is genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

**Again and again, I have been struck by the power of sports to bridge divides. I believe the Game Plan will support the beginning of an important conversation on addressing and countering hate speech and ultimately foster prevention on violence and atrocity crimes such as genocide.**

Online and offline, hate speech plays an important role in convincing people that violence is logical, justifiable, even necessary. The voice, authority, example, and conviction of the UN Summit Sport Working Group has led to the development of the initiative that we launch today, the Plan of Action to Combat Hate Speech through Engagement with Sports.

The Game Plan sets out a broad range of ways to address and counter incitement to violence, responding to warning signs to take early action to prevent these crimes. I urge the widest possible dissemination and implementation of the Game Plan. It can help save lives, reduce suffering, and realize our shared vision of peaceful, inclusive, and just societies in which diversity is valued and the rights of all individuals are protected.

I recently visited Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum in Phnom Penh Cambodia, where I had the privilege of meeting survivors of atrocity crimes. I call on every member state to take concrete steps to protect communities at risk, including minorities, and address discrimination and persecution.

States have the primary obligation for preventing genocide, but sports, religious, and community leaders, civil society, the private sector, and the media, including social media platforms, play an essential role.

On this International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide, I urge stakeholders to use all means at their disposal to prevent and end this crime.

## Remarks by the United Nations Chef de Cabinet Mr. Earle Courtenay Rattray



The International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime must not only be a day for reflection but also one for renewed commitment to act.

Despite the lessons learned from the horrors of the Holocaust, as well as from Rwanda, Srebrenica, and Cambodia, we continue to face the challenge of preventing this heinous crime daily. Too many people continue to be discriminated against based on their identity.

At the United Nations we believe that preventing genocide requires constant vigilance and commitment to act by all, including governments, international and regional organizations, as well as civil society, the media, and other important stakeholders. Because genocide prevention is an all-of-society endeavor.

For this reason, ladies and gentlemen, I am extremely pleased that today's event on the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime focuses on the contribution of the sport community in preventing genocide and other atrocity crimes.

**I firmly believe in the role of sport as a global unifying factor. And one that speaks to all groups in societies including women and youth and the most vulnerable. Because sport allows people to come together despite their differences for meaningful competition.**

Hence, I have no doubt that the Game Plan that we are launching here today will contribute to fostering inclusion and promote human dignity, including preventing intergroup tensions from escalating, countering and addressing hate speech and incitement of violence, and supporting the building of inclusive societies.

By engaging with the sport community, we are one step closer to a world free from genocide and other atrocities.

Today's commemoration provides an opportunity for us all, the international community, to renew our commitment to the prevention of genocide.

Let's join the challenge.

# Remarks by the United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide Ms. Alice Wairimu Nderitu

Today is a day of commemoration to remember and to honor the victims and survivors of the crime of genocide around the world. It is also a day for action. By taking concrete steps towards prevention, we can live up to the promise of this day and of the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide adopted 74 years ago.

My mandate is to monitor and raise alarm to the United Nations Secretary-General, to the Security Council, to Member States, and to other relevant actors, on the risk factors of genocide and related atrocity crimes. I also raise awareness on the causes and dynamics of atrocity crimes and support member states and other relevant actors to promote prevention of these crimes.

As the United Nations focal point on hate speech, my office coordinates the implementation of the UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech launched by the Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in 2019. History has taught us the dangers of hate speech and its impact if left unchallenged.

**Hate speech can be both an indicator of risk and a trigger of the atrocity crimes of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. We saw this in the lead-up to the Holocaust, the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, and the genocide in Srebrenica, where the narratives of "the other" were used to dehumanize and vilify, contributing to exclusion, stigmatization, discrimination, isolation, hate crimes, and, in the most serious instances, atrocity crimes including genocide.**

The 1948 Convention codified the crime of genocide for the first time. Its preamble recognizes that at all periods of history genocide has inflicted great losses on humanity and that international cooperation is required to liberate humankind from such an odious scourge.

According to the Convention, genocide is a crime that can take place both in time of war as well as a time of peace. The international community and the United Nations has in the past been instrumental in setting the judicial mechanisms necessary to determine genocide as a crime.

This includes the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals. And I acknowledge the presence of my colleagues and friends, Judge Gatti Santana, the president of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, and Serge Brammertz, the chief prosecutor of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals.

So the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide has been ratified by 153 United Nations member states, demonstrating its significance. The most recent ratification was in July this year by the Republic of Zambia.

So leading up to the 75th Commemoration of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, which will be next year on 9 December 2024, my office will launch an initiative to support state parties to the Genocide Convention to strengthen the implementation of the Convention at the national level and encourage states that have yet to do so to ratify the Genocide Convention.



# Remarks by the United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide

## Ms. Alice Wairimu Nderitu

Among those who have ratified include some who have adopted national legislation to punish the crime of genocide at the national level or further enhance its application by the recognition of universal jurisdiction for this crime. Some have ratified the Convention but not taken steps to domesticate it in national legislation, limiting its effectiveness.

The domestication of the Convention provides an opportunity to support mechanisms for prevention at the national level. The initiative will also aim to create a system of peer exchange between state parties to enhance knowledge-sharing and good practices in this regard.

**Genocide is a process throughout which there are warning signs. Ratification and the establishment of national legal and policy tools as well as structures that can identify and address these early warning signs is a crucial step of prevention.**

**So we do know that identity-based conflicts and hate crime cannot always be solved by national governments and traditional diplomacy.**

Translating the concept of genocide prevention and countering and addressing of hate speech as an international norm into a practical reality implemented at the community level remains one of my top priorities.

Engaging communities as partners in decision-making and policy formulation processes is crucial to the prevention and de-escalation of atrocity crimes.

On October 27, 2018, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, witnessed the deadliest anti-Semitic attack in United States history, and the Pittsburgh community leaders, through the Eradicate Hate Global Summit, invited the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres for a commemoration in October 2021.

The Secretary-General asked me to represent him as the keynote speaker, and I was impressed with the Pittsburgh community's commitment that they would be remembered more for their global leadership against hate and not just a terrible act of hate that had happened in their midst.

I went back to Pittsburgh in September 2022 for the second Eradicate Hate Global Summit, and I met speakers who spoke of shootings such as had happened in Buffalo, motivated by hate, where a gunman killed ten people and wounded three in a racist attack at a grocery store in a predominantly Black neighborhood.

So in recognition of the prevalence of hate crimes globally, the Eradicate Hate Global Summit and my office created the UN Summit Sport Working Group composed of representatives of various sport leagues and partners, who include the Pittsburgh Steelers, Major League Baseball, Boston Red Sox, Fenway Sports Group, Buffalo Bills, Major League Soccer, National Football League, Buffalo Sabres, United States Women's National Soccer Team, the Pittsburgh Penguins, the Pittsburgh Pirates, the National Association for Stock Car Racing (NASCAR), Major League Soccer (MLS), National Basketball Association (NBA), Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA), Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC), the National Hockey League (NHL), and Pegula Sports and Entertainment, the Anti-Defamation League Sports Leadership Council, and CNX Resources Cooperation, and outside of the U.S. we also have the Liverpool Football Club.

# Remarks by the United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide

Ms. Alice Wairimu Nderitu

And I co-chair this UN Summit Group with Michele Rosenthal, who will be speaking shortly, and with Laura Ellsworth, who is co-chair of the Eradicate Hate Global Summit and who will also be speaking shortly.

So the UN Summit Sports Working Group put together the Plan of Action for Countering Hate Speech through Engagement with Sports, the Game Plan, based on the UN strategy and plan of action on hate speech and fully aligned with international human rights law, in particular, the right to freedom of expression and opinion.

Like the President of the General Assembly, I turn to Nelson Mandela, in his infinite wisdom, who left us with these words: Sports has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does.

It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sports can create hope where once there was only despair.



**Members of the UN - Eradicate Hate Global Summit Sports Working Group  
at the United Nations HQ, 9 December 2022**

We look forward to continuing the wonderful collaboration as a United Nations that we have begun here with the Eradicate Hate Summit and the UN Summit Sport Working Group through the Game Plan and working with you, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, United Nations Resident Coordinators around the world, to take this important plan of action to every part of the world and engage as many sports partners as possible in our collective fight against hate speech and atrocity crimes.

And in that way, once again, give voice to the never again that resonated in this very United Nations in 1948 when the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide became the first ever human rights treaty adopted by the United Nations.

**Remarks by the Eradicate Hate Global Summit  
Sports Working Group Co-Chair  
Ms. Michele Rosenthal**



I am humbled to be in front of a group as distinguished as the United Nations. I ask myself how I ended up here with people who change the world every day on such a large scale. I don't have an advanced education or background in understanding hate. I am not experienced in public speaking and, in fact, mostly help others to be in the public light. I don't have many of the things all of you may have.

And perhaps this, what I don't have, is precisely why I have been asked to stand before you today. I don't have my brothers, Cecil and David, anymore because of what occurred on October 27, 2018, at the Tree of Life Synagogue.

But ironically, even though we don't have them here any longer, and they were not known publicly in their lives, I wholeheartedly believe they still offer us something in the way they lived.

I am the proud daughter of Eli and Joy Rosenthal. I was raised in the tight-knit Jewish community of Squirrel Hill in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, along with my sister and brothers. We frequently spent Saturdays in the synagogue with my grandma. Unlike me and my sister, my brothers continued going to services every single Sabbath long after my grandma had passed. They were some of the most dedicated congregants. They often were literally first through the door to greet people.

I know my neighbors by name, just as their grandparents and my grandparents knew each other. We were one of many neighborhoods of Pittsburgh that has continued its strong identity based on the immigrant groups who settled there. So on Saturday, October 27, 2018, our Sabbath, when my husband and I were planning to run our weekly errands, everything felt normal.

We lived two blocks from the Tree of Life Synagogue. On that quiet morning, I came downstairs and he remarked that something must be wrong because of all of the sirens he was hearing. My curiosity piqued a bit, but I knew we were safe because we lived in the peaceful neighborhood of Squirrel Hill.

We got in the car and my husband's phone notified him of a text. My family's life would forever change at that moment. The text read, "Active shooter at Tree of Life Synagogue." I screamed, "The boys are there." At the scene we heard over and over again that the shooter was screaming, "All Jews must die." The boys, my brothers, Cecil and David Rosenthal, both older than me, with my sister Diane in between them, both had Fragile X, a genetic condition that causes intellectual disability, behavioral, and learning challenges. But that condition did not define them.

I knew they were different. My whole family knew. But my amazing parents, in their wisdom and love, ensured that the boys were part of our family and they would be treated equally. What I failed to realize is that they were not equal but far better than most in our world. They had a strong sense of identity and connection to their faith community.

They flawlessly exhibited characteristics that most never achieve in a lifetime; inquisitive, trusting, sensitive, thankful, kind, loving, and compassionate. They were raised at home and then continued living in a group home in our neighborhood within Pittsburgh, the City of Champions, the nickname given to Pittsburgh for our numerous championship sports teams.

Not only have we been the City of Champions, where our sports teams have long been the connective tissue of the city, but we are also a city of bridges that span over our three large rivers. Those rivers often divide these historic ethnic neighborhoods and are likely the reason that Squirrel Hill has remained for many generations as the center of Jewish life.

**Remarks by the Eradicate Hate Global Summit  
Sports Working Group Co-Chair  
Ms. Michele Rosenthal**

**But after the shooting I witnessed something very special and uplifting occur. I saw a city culturally divided by rivers and bridges come together as one. In one heart-pounding moment, neighbors crossed all of their preconceived divides to help comfort and serve one another.**

Although I was overwhelmed by the chaos, heartache, and tragedy of the day, I found an unexpected source of strength in the weeks to come, the solidarity in which my city stood against such terrible hate, as well as their unconditional love and care for those of us left grieving such a terrible loss.

We witnessed the Pittsburgh sports teams come together and take the lead in the fight against hate.

My career began in politics and government and then transitioned to sports when I worked for the Pittsburgh Steelers in community relations. In 2015 I started my own consulting business, which has allowed me to continue to work with athletes in sports. My community relations experience has taught me how impactful the platform of sports can be to reach, connect, and effect positive change.

After the shooting, my journey has led me to become a part of the Eradicate Hate Global Summit. Through the Summit I have had the opportunity to meet so many amazing people who all share a common bond. One of those individuals was the United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Alice Nderitu.

Following the Summit last year, the Special Adviser reached out to Laura and me to form the Sports Working Group, which you will hear more about from Laura Ellsworth, who has done an extraordinary job establishing this conference.

I know that words matter, especially when people have a large audience. I have had the opportunity to meet many political leaders on the local and national level in my career.

I have gotten to know personally the lives of some of the most famous athletes in my generation and have advised and guided them in their community relations activities.

But the way my brothers lived, and the legacy they left behind, is a lesson that we all have more growth to do in the simple ways of curiosity, compassion, and seeing other people with no judgment. And regrettably, I was not aware of how they impacted our city and the people that make it special until after their deaths.

Cecil and David, good men who lived good lives. Cecil and David did not know hate until the last minutes of their lives. They exhibited all of the qualities and actions we want the world to show towards each other.

And we have an opportunity to carry that forward on a level they would have never imagined.

I hope that you will join us to follow their example.

## Remarks by the Buffalo New York, 5/14 survivor Mr. Raymond Whitfield



Please allow me to start by asking for your patience should I stumble along the way. You see, our scars are still fresh and we are still finding our way.

That said, on behalf of my family and all the victims of the Buffalo, New York, 5/14 heinous, racially motivated massacre of ten innocent souls that included my beloved mother, Ms. Ruth E. Whitfield, I thank you for this opportunity.

And I'd like to especially thank the UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Alice Nderitu, along with this esteemed institution and everyone involved with this historic initiative for inviting us to add our voices of resilience to denounce hate speech wherever it is and in all of its forms.

For me, today is a beautiful, tragic day. It's beautiful because in this wondrous space of endless possibilities, I get to share this monumental moment with you.

Yet, I'm ever mindful that I got here by losing the most precious thing in the world to me in the worst possible way.

In the hands of a misguided, isolated individual turned white supremacist, who decided my loved one and, by extension, me and everyone who remotely looks like me, does not belong here, and worse, we don't even deserve the right to exist. In the damnable words of that assailant, his intent was to kill as many Black people as he could.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, this despicable act was his preamble to genocide.

But in this moment, it was in that moment to experience the sympathetic outpouring of support from the greater Buffalo region to the global community, and with that, to have the hometown heroes of our sports teams reach out and embrace us, and embrace us to say that, yes, you do belong here.

**Yes, you do belong on our team.  
You have a contribution to make, you see, because there's still time left on the clock.  
We can still get a win.**

In that spirit, my family and I are determined to discover innovative ways to pull our communities up, not by the proverbial bootstraps, but by the heartstrings of the countless loved ones who have fallen before us, heartstrings that inexorably tie us to this cause.

But we know we need you. We need all of you. These United Nations, the athletes, sports teams and leagues, your voice matters. Perhaps more than you can know.

Because it uniquely resonates not only with the broken-hearted, grieving families, but it also connects with the isolated, misguided individual who is left confronting a choice, and that choice is to become a lone-wolf loser or to join the winning team.

And we will win. Together we will win by choosing love, peace, and equity for all. On behalf of the victims of hate speech and violence worldwide, from the bottom of our hearts, for all that you do in commensurating your efforts here today in this fight, we thank you.

**Remarks by the Eradicate Hate Global Summit  
Sports Working Group Co-Chair  
Ms. Laura Ellsworth, Esq.**



It is an honor for all of us to be here with you today. My name is Laura Ellsworth, and I am the co-chair of the Eradicate Hate Global Summit. I'm also a partner in a law firm called Jones Day, where I run community initiatives in 40 offices on five continents around the world. And I live in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where I have been an admirer and friend of Michele Rosenthal for ten years and, more recently, of Raymond Whitfield and his family.

The attack that happened in Pittsburgh that killed Michele's two brothers and nine others was the worst of humanity on display for the world. But it was in the days and months after that event that brings us here today.

And as was said, we saw people of every faith and race and gender and ethnicity and nationality come out in support of the victims and to say no to hate. And not just in Pittsburgh, around the world. But in the weeks after the vigils ended, those voices quieted. And only months later, half a world away in Christchurch, New Zealand, we watched another community endure the same grief and pain and suffering as we had when 51 Muslims were killed at prayer.

And again we watched the world rise up and say no to hate, and again we watched those voices fade away. We understood that we in Pittsburgh shared a terrible kinship with communities around the world, with Christchurch, with Buffalo, with El Paso, with Poway, on and on and on, where people who had done nothing were killed for who they were.

And we know that hate has no nationality. It is a universal poison, and no one is immune because everyone is the other to someone.

And so we in Pittsburgh said to ourselves, what can we do to mobilize those voices of good, not after the tragedy, but before. How can we build a culture of those voices that we know are there, that we know counter hate, how can we bring them to the fore.

And so together with my Summit co-chair, Mark Nordenberg, the Chancellor Emeritus of the University of Pittsburgh, we amassed a group of community leaders and philanthropists in Pittsburgh, and we founded the Eradicate Hate Summit that you've heard a great deal about.

The Summit brings the global experts in the world in anti-hate, and people who know maybe even more than they do, the survivors of hate, we bring them together in person, across disciplines, across borders, across cultures, across political and ideological divides, to come together and work together to achieve targeted solutions that can help reduce the incidence of hate.

How do we do it? The top people in the world, together in person in Pittsburgh, where we form working groups with a specific deliverable to achieve and a year to do it. And they'll be on their feet one year later at the next annual Summit explaining to the world how far they got. The Summit is built to drive results.

The working group that you're going to meet here today is one of those working groups from the Summit. We involve people from every sphere of work, from technology, from law, from sports, medicine, academia, civil society, government, law enforcement, everyone in the world who has a stake in fighting hate. And it is everyone in the world. This isn't somebody else's problem. This is our problem.

Every single one of us owns a piece of the solution to this problem.

**Remarks by the Eradicate Hate Global Summit  
Sports Working Group Co-Chair  
Ms. Laura Ellsworth, Esq.**

Today the working group includes representatives of the United Nations and every major sports league in the United States and then some. You'll be hearing from some of them in a moment, but many more of them are here today, and if I could ask for your indulgence, I would like to have the members of the Sport Working Group stand to be recognized. Please stand. Thank you.

Over the last two years, this group has been working to develop what we call the Game Plan, which provides a menu of resources and practices that fans and teams and leagues and corporate partners can deploy in their own operations and in the communities in which they live and work, not after the tragedies, but to create an ongoing and incessant global culture that visibly and actively says no to hate in all of its forms wherever it may be found.

The quote from Nelson Mandela was so profound to us, and the most important part of it for this gathering is when he said: It speaks to youth in a language they can understand.

As Raymond just told you, and as Michele and I and others involved in the Summit have come to learn, almost without exception, the most prolific killers in hate crimes are young men, lost young men, who have been seduced by the very active voices of hate in this world.

We can and must put other voices in front of them with the same urgency and incessant nature as those who would proffer hate. That is what sports has the power to do.

Now, our working group started with what we knew best, the sports teams of the United States.

But we know that our Game Plan will be made immeasurably better by the input from other countries, other cultures, other sports, other teams, and that's what brings us here today. We can't do that alone. We need your help.

**We need every person in this room to teach us who your sports teams are, connect us, introduce us, bring their voices to our Game Plan. Help us grow, help us make it better, help us take it around the world over the next two years so that when we stand up in front of the Summit in two years, we can say that every country on the face of this earth has said to its sports teams, be a part of this solution, to stand up and visibly say no to hate in all of its forms.**

**And for the next lost young man who is sitting there today in his basement or his attic looking for guidance, looking for purpose and truth, he will hear our voices and not the voices of hate.**

We are all truly humbled to be here today. We don't work for governments. We're not diplomats. We are ordinary citizens who have refused to be cowed by hate. And you will hear from people today who have resolved to do everything in their power to bring their organizations to join us in this mission.

We're here today to ask all of you to join us in this mission as well.

I close these remarks with the words of another Pittsburgher, Dr. Jonas Salk, who developed the cure for polio, and I suspect is an inspiration to many people in this room today. Dr. Salk said: Hope lies in dreams, in imagination, and in the courage of those who dare to make dreams into reality. We are here today in this room to ask all of you to help us make our dream a reality.

**Remarks by the National Football League Senior  
Vice President, Social Responsibility  
Ms. Anna Isaacson**



It is an honor to be here with you today.

The National Football League, the NFL, has long held the belief that there are really two core pillars to our existence, and that is football and community.

We are so fortunate to enjoy the support of millions of fans around the country and globally, and in return, it is our responsibility, our obligation, to give back to these communities that continue to sustain us year after year.

We embrace this responsibility to use our platform to address some of the world's most pressing challenges, cancer, gender-based violence, social justice, and more.

It is our core value of respect that drives much of this work, particularly that of Inspire Change, our social justice initiative that works to end racism and stop hate in all of its forms, and it is the motivation behind our active support for this working group and this plan of action to counter hate speech in sports.

Our fans include every demographic in the nation.

The majority of our NFL players are Black men. This has proven to be a powerful combination where unity emerges and we strive to choose love over anything else.

Sports brings people together, and that unity is palpable when you're lucky enough to find yourself in a rocking stadium with 60,000-plus fans.

Of course, sport also has its challenges, and we have our challenges at the NFL.

**We often mirror society, and we have all witnessed far too much hatred and vitriol; but what sports has is passion and energy, and every one of us here believe the passion and energy to also move people and make an impact.**

It's really an honor to speak before you today, to join my colleagues, my friends, to drive home the power that sport has to make meaningful change in our societies. As the head of social responsibility for the NFL, I've had the pleasure to witness this force for good for nearly two decades.

And there is nothing, nothing more motivating than this incredible phenomenon. We will do a lot of good together as each of us go back and implement the key facets of this plan in our own ways.



# Remarks by the Liverpool Football Club, Senior Manager - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Mr. Rishi Jain



I would like to start by a thank you to Laura, Michele, Special Adviser Nderitu, for their leadership, commitments, and direction in making today and the efforts of the Sports Working Group possible. Thank you to the General Assembly for generally hosting us and providing myself and colleagues with this platform to share our thoughts with you today.

Liverpool Football Club is the world's most followed football club. Our 130-year history sees the club as the most successful English football team on the pitch. Success is very much part of our history.

Success off the pitch is also pivotal to what we do, and it is why we are extremely appreciative of the warm welcome of colleagues who recognize the role that we have played in striving for equality.

At Liverpool FC we are committed to equality, diversity, and inclusion and eradicating hate. It's something that's intrinsic in our values.

**Our employees, players, supporters, communities, stakeholders, they expect us to lead in this area. They expect us to take on issues that are relevant to the sport and beyond.**

Our work in this area is encompassed by the Red Together program, and this is how we talk about our commitment to eradicating hate and discrimination and promoting inclusion.

We take this responsibility very seriously and are privileged to have such well-respected voices in this space who can talk to this authentically and with purpose.

We have seen first-team manager Jurgen Klopp speak openly and candidly about his ally shift to the LGBT+ community, club captain Jordan Henderson, men's players Trent Alexander-Arnold and Virgil van Dijk, and many others talk authentically to topics around racial equity, gender equality, and disability inclusion.

It's no coincidence that Liverpool FC was the first UK sports team to take the knee. We see Liverpool FC's role in this as leaders with a platform to use our voice to prevent atrocities through education and raising awareness, ensuring consequences to action at level-level, to hopefully preventing them occur at their most tragic.

In UK football the main mechanism of hate speech is in social media, and despite our success and popularity, we are not immune to that. We see this hate far too often.

For example, a typical non-match-day social media post will receive around 500 comments. A holiday, a post marked on a Jewish holiday will receive 40,000, with over 50 percent of them being hate speech.

Our role in the Sports Working Group is relatively new, and we are tasked with bringing the Game Plan across to the UK and beyond. We recognize and embrace, for it to be a truly global plan and set of commitments, it must translate to all sports, communities, and ways of life.

Using football as a mechanism to do this, the biggest game in the world, under the banner of Liverpool Football Club, the biggest football club in the world, is an important task. To raise awareness, educate, and promote the eradication of hate is something that we are wholeheartedly committed to.

We wish to leverage our resources, brand, and reach to support this coalition to be a truly global plan of action.

**Remarks by the Boston Red Sox  
Executive Vice President of Social Impact  
Ms. Rebekah Splaine Salwasser**



I'd like to begin with gratitude.

Thank you to Laura, Michele, and the Special Adviser for being the heart of this work in herding all of us and our respective agencies and entities the last few months. Without your direction, inspiration, and organization, none of this would be possible.

Thank you also to Secretary-General Guterres for spearheading this effort and to the President of the General Assembly for having us today and permitting us to share our vision and mission with you all. It is clear that you are committed and inspired, as we are, by this critical work. And thank you to my colleagues and peers for committing yourselves and your agencies to improving our collective communities.

As you may know, Fenway Sports Group has a broad portfolio that includes the Boston Red Sox, Liverpool Football Club, the Pittsburgh Penguins, a stake in NASCAR's RFK Racing, and a sports marketing agency, to name a few. We joined this working group because its mission perfectly aligns with the core principles and priorities of our ownership group at FSG.

In addition to winning championships, which is core to everything we do, one of the fundamental commitments we've made to our constituents is to be an inclusive organization where everyone feels welcome. But this is simply not possible if your venues are spaces where people don't feel welcome or where people feel comfortable using racial slurs or where homophobia is tolerated. So we've worked hard over the past 20 years to make our internal organizations and our venues at Fenway Park and our partner venues communities of inclusion.

Now that's not to say we haven't had our fair share of incidents. In fact, we've seen an uptick in reported hate incidents at Fenway Park over the last few years specifically. While we think this increase is due to both the pandemic's negative influence on fan behavior and the current contentious global environment, we're hopeful that the rise is mostly attributed to our efforts to empower and inspire our fans to call out and condemn hatred in any shape or form.

As a former professional athlete myself, I can tell you how personally meaningful and important this work is.

**I have seen and lived firsthand the power of sport. At its best, it can unify, equalize, and create joy and inspiration. But at its worst, sports can fuel division, hate, exclusion, and even violence. I choose to have hope that we can make the most out of our world's common denominator, which is sport. I choose optimism that together we can unite our people, voices, brands, and resources to eliminate and end hate.**

By aligning our agencies, we can take a hard stand against those that choose to spread vitriol and bigotry. By leveraging the celebrity of our athletes and players, we can influence our fans to choose love and kindness and to see that we all have more in common than we do differences.

So I'd like to close where I began, which is gratitude. Despite much of this work's purpose beginning with loss and grief, I'm grateful for the commitment and passion of so many who continue to fuel our efforts. I look forward to continued collaboration and pledge on behalf of John Henry, Tom Werner, Mike Gordon, and our entire FSG ownership group that we are dedicated to this mission and eager to see the impact of our contributions.

# Remarks by the Center on Extremism Anti-Defamation League Vice President Mr. Oren Segal



Thank you, President General Assembly, thank you, Special Adviser, Laura Ellsworth, Michele Rosenthal, Raymond Whitfield. Thank you for the inspiration.

My name is Oren Segal. I'm the Vice President of the ADL Center on Extremism. My job at ADL, whose mission is to not only stop the defamation of the Jewish people but to secure justice and fair treatment for all. My job is to lead ADL's effort to identify, analyze, and respond to extremism and hate, to expose those who seek to divide us, to incite violence, and to protect communities and hold the bad actors accountable.

But I also view my role, as much as I can, as finding hope in the most difficult of circumstances. And that hope is rooted in the knowledge that even in moments of political and social strife, when extremism and hate threaten our communities, our democracies, our ability to communicate and share experiences, that there are indeed alternatives to all that. There are off ramps. There are strategies that can make a meaningful impact in the fight against hate.

And sports have that undeniable and unique power to bring people together. You've heard this. You will hear it over and over from my colleagues.

**A match or a game provides spectators with a much needed sense of community. Fans are focused on what unites them, even for just a moment, rather than their differences.**

**And we have an opportunity here to harness this unifying energy to address and counter hate, while also advocating for respect and inclusion.**

Players, teams, leagues, governing bodies, have an incredible opportunity to join in this effort to cultivate the broadest possible participation in this critical global initiative.

We fundamentally believe the value of our sports are not only greater than our perceived divisions but can be an actual catalyst in the fight against hate or the fight for good.

And as a leading anti-hate organization, ADL is committed to seeking out innovations and partnerships in this fight. That's why I'm here today. That, and Michele and Raymond. This is also why in 2017 we launched at ADL the Sports Leadership Council, to bring together leaders from across the industry, commissioners, team owners, athletes, academics, others, with the mission to use the unifying power of sports to promote and achieve positive social change. It's not just on the field, it's not just in the locker room, but also in broader communities around the country and around the world.

We have learned a lot over the past five years. We have done a lot of listening, and we have been inspired, and we have recommitted ourselves to sharing the best practices that we have learned in which the sports community can proactively counter hate of all kinds.

With ADL's expertise in combatting anti-Semitism, extremism, and all forms of hate, we are excited not only to explain the landscape and the challenges of this, but also advise on the best ways for sports organizations to activate against hate in meaningful and impactful ways.

Together, the United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Eradicate Hate Summit Sports Working Group are creating new ways for sports teams, leagues, fans, people who care, to recognize and forcefully counter hate, to be that force for good, a reminder of what is possible when influencers and organizations and fans come together and use their collective voice to lead.

There's a long history of sports which is filled with moments and leaders who have impacted social change, people who have inspired millions.

We strive to be part of that legacy, that effort to marry the possibilities of sports to change the world with a commitment that we have to making the world a better place.

We are excited. We are honored to join this effort to deepen our collective commitment and to be part of this inspiring team.

**Remarks by the Pegula Sports and Entertainment  
Senior Vice President of People and Business  
Administration  
Ms. Christie Joseph**



Thank you to the President of the General Assembly, thank you to the Special Adviser, Michele, Laura, Raymond.

I really appreciate all of you and the commitment.

I'm Christie Joseph, the Senior Vice President of People and Business Administration at Pegula Sports and Entertainment, which includes the Buffalo Bills, Buffalo Sabres, Buffalo Bandits, the Rochester Americans, and the Rochester Knighthawks. I'm also the executive sponsor for our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council.

On May 14, 2022, tragedy struck our community when ten people were killed and three were injured in a racially motivated shooting at a Tops Supermarket in east Buffalo.

This vile act has no place in our community, and our organizations responded immediately to help those most affected by this heartbreaking event.

Our owners, players, coaches, alumni, and members of our front office spent time volunteering in our community.

Our teams visited the memorial site and local schools over the following months, and we honored our victims, survivors, and their families at home opening ceremonies.

Our foundations assisted local charities and non-profit organizations, directly helping the victims and the community at large. Our fan bases raised over a million dollars through Choose Love T-shirts to donate to the Buffalo Together Community Response Fund and the Buffalo 5/14 Survivors Fund.

But this is not the end of our focus in the fight against racism and hate speech in our community and world.

**Hate has no place in our community. Our players amplify that every time they step on the ice or field this season wearing Choose Love, End Racism, and Stop Hate on their helmets.**

**That's why this means so much to us to be a part of this working group and to help implement the Game Plan. Sport has the power to unify and inspire.**

And by implementing the working group's Game Plan, we hope to inspire our fans to eradicate hate in our community and instead choose love.

We thank all of you for recognizing the importance of this initiative, and we look forward to applying the Game Plan throughout our organizations going forward. Stop hate, end racism, choose love.

# Remarks by the NASCAR Senior Director, Social Responsibility & Communications

Mr. Pete Stuart



I have the privilege of leading social responsibility, community engagement and partnerships for NASCAR. I'll start by thanking the United Nations for the opportunity to speak with you today.

We're certainly grateful for the chance to come together as part of this very important collective of leagues and teams. The opportunity before us to leverage the power of sport to end hate is an incredible one. But it must be more than simply explored. It should be seized with an intense focus and a tremendous sense of urgency.

As it's been said, sports are a place where people come together, all people, all communities. It is one of the great unifiers that exists across our global culture. We believe that should be true about NASCAR, the sport that I represent here today.

**You see, there's a lot to love about stock car racing and so much that makes us unique, the sights, the sounds, the speed of the cars; but what's also true is that it shouldn't matter your gender, it shouldn't matter your race, who you love or how you worship. When those engines fire, all that should matter is how well you can drive a race car.**

For that reason, NASCAR should be a leading example when it comes to diversity, inclusion, tolerance, acceptance, but it hasn't always been that way.

We are a sport now that is undergoing a transformation. When NASCAR made its voice heard in June of 2020, we acknowledged openly and honestly that our sport had not done enough to help bridge the divide that exists in our country.

In doing so, we held ourselves accountable and recommitted the entire NASCAR industry to building a more welcoming and inclusive environment for everyone that loves racing. The first and most critical step in that process was banning the Confederate flag from all racetracks and facilities, a message to the world that our venues and sport would not be a haven for symbols of hate and oppression.

It was a seminal moment in NASCAR's history that inspired more positive change, an expanded DE&I platform, revamped education and training resources, impactful community engagement, and a more resonant voice on social issues. Communities that did not think NASCAR was for them are now feeling differently about our sport and helping us build a culture that is safe and welcoming.

That's why we're here today, because we believe NASCAR has a responsibility to help end hate speech. And we believe in the unifying power of sport to have an impact on a global scale.

I would like to thank Laura and Michele for assembling this working group and the UN for believing in the role that sports can play in helping to shepherd this important work. We are eager and excited to help bring this collaboration to bear.

# Remarks by the Public Delegate of the United States to the United Nations Mr. Douglas Bunch



It's an honor to be here on behalf of the United States to commemorate this day. Instances of hate and rage close to home here in the United States, in Pittsburgh and in Buffalo, have deeply scarred the lives of people here on this very panel whose courage we admire for being with us here today.

Farther away, in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Ukraine, we've seen sobering reminders of what atrocity prevention means in 2022. Lost lives, lost generations, lost livelihoods, demolished social infrastructure, including hospitals, destroyed social contracts, and the prospect of unimaginable grief turned to hate and rage.

At the individual level we see the generational and toxic impact that trauma has on survivors and their families. Without appropriate support in the short and long runs, this trauma frays social fabric and inclusion and risks a renewed cycle of violence.

At the collective national and global level, armed violence and insecurity have a destructive impact on a country's development, affecting economic growth, and often resulting in long-standing grievances among communities.

Violence affects children's rights, health, development, and well-being and their ability to thrive. There's a perfect storm of issues impacting children and youth right now. We should all be concerned about the significant development backsliding this portends and the escalating fragility risk overall in communities.

Lack of access to justice means that conflicts remain unresolved and survivors cannot secure their own protection and redress. Institutions that do not function according to legitimate laws succumb to arbitrariness and abuse of power and become less capable of delivering public services to everyone.

Exclusion and discrimination not only violate human rights but also cause resentment, animosity, and give rise to violence. We have seen a confluence of crises here at home and around the world which, together, propelled by the injustice I've just cited, have colluded to turn back the clock of progress.

The sustainable development goals, or SDG's, need urgent rescuing, as the Secretary-General noted earlier this year, or we risk pushing millions into hunger and poverty, working against the very core of the SDG's of leaving no one behind. SDG 16, which is about peace, justice, and strong institutions, and focuses on reducing violence, death rates, abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and corruption, is the foundation on which the other SDG's are all built.

The rule of law safeguards against some of the structural root causes of atrocities, fostering trust between the state and its people through the principle of equality before the law regardless of whether you are a member of the cabinet, or a mother, or a member of a minority ethnic group.

This is hard work, not to be done alone or in isolation. It is and should be inherently connected to other prevention efforts, conflict prevention, violence prevention, and the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence.

**Sport has historically been a key mechanism for bringing communities together across divides and can be an important vehicle for promoting positive messages that contribute to social inclusion and cohesion, strengthening understanding and respect for diversity and reducing stereotypes.**

I thank our panelists for speaking to concrete examples of the impact of sport on prevention. We must all work together, member states, the UN system, civil society and human rights defenders, to truly make never again a reality on the global level, to choose love, as Mr. Whitfield described before.

We will win. And sports are one vehicle and avenue to work towards this goal.

**Remarks by Ambassador Fergal Mythen, Permanent  
Mission of Ireland to the United Nations  
on behalf of the Western European and Others Group**



I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Western European and Others Group. We meet today on one of the most important, and one of the most solemn days in the UN's calendar. Together we are marking 74 years since the establishment of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the landmark instrument by which the crime of genocide was codified for the first time under international law.

It is a day for reflection and commemoration for all the victims who have suffered society's most heinous crime. It is also a day for action. A day for the international community to ensure that perpetrators are held accountable and for us to band together to ensure that genocide and mass atrocity crimes never happen again. We also have a responsibility to tackle the root causes and address the early warning signs associated with genocide and atrocity crimes. We have seen throughout history how hateful rhetoric can forge divisions that should not exist.

**Hate speech is designed to fuel animosity, resentment and drive the agenda of those who seek division and violence over peace. When these narratives appear, the international community must react to refute and counteract them before disinformation can spread. But we must also redouble our efforts to prioritise prevention of these narratives in the first place.**

To this end, we must seek to promote social inclusion, cohesion and respect for diversity.

Humanity is unquestionably diverse. This has always been something to celebrate.

Unfortunately there continues to be people who fear instead of cherish differences. Our first step must be to show them otherwise. In the famous words of the late Nelson Mandela, "No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite."

For all our wonderful differences, humanity has always found a way to find common solidarity in a number of life's joys. Whether that be music, art or, of course, sport.

We welcome the efforts of the UN Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect to create a Plan of Action focused on sport to address and counter hate speech, and we call on relevant partners and stakeholders to become involved and support these efforts.

How can our reflection from today lead us to better collaboration with our neighbours on this critical issue?

On this day, we are reminded why the UN has come into being. From the darkness of its origins after the Second World War and crimes of the Holocaust, humanity put this Convention into place in the pursuit of peace. It is our duty to uphold and advance its values.

**Remarks by Ambassador Fatumanava-o-Upolu III Pa'olelei Luteru,  
Permanent Mission of Independent State of Samoa to the  
United Nations  
on behalf of the members of the Asia Pacific Group**



On behalf of the members of the Asia Pacific Group, I am honoured to deliver these remarks on the 74th Anniversary of the Genocide Convention and the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime.

We take this opportunity first and foremost to offer our deepest tribute to all the victims of genocide and reiterate our belief that genocide is a scourge on humanity and every effort must be taken to prevent such crimes from happening.

We urge all member states to intensify and increase their efforts to prevent violent conflict and atrocity crimes, and in particular the crime of genocide to hold those responsible to account and to continue to strive for peaceful resolutions according to international law.

We also take this opportunity to call on all those States that have not yet ratified or acceded to the Genocide Convention to consider doing so as a matter of priority.

Today's anniversary highlights the many challenges faced by all those impacted by violence and war.

We remain concerned that the perpetrators of many of the systemic violations of human rights and international humanitarian law as well as acts that may constitute the crime of genocide as per the 1948 Genocide Convention, continue to elude justice.

We call on the international community to play a greater role in seeking justice for all victims of genocide. It is our collective responsibility to ensure accountability for all victims of genocide.

We welcome the theme of this year's observance, "the role of sport in atrocity prevention".

**We recognize that sports, arts and physical activity have the power to change perceptions, prejudices and behaviours, as well as to inspire people, break down racial and political barriers, combat discrimination and defuse conflict, and thus help prevent atrocities.**

We believe that greater and sustainable investment in education and conflict resolution strategies will strengthen societies' resilience to address the root causes of conflict which can so easily lead to war and genocide if not adequately and effectively addressed.



**Remarks by Ambassador Ljubomir Danailov Frchkoski, Permanent Mission of the Republic of North Macedonia to the United Nations**  
**on behalf of the EAG Group of States**



Thank you on behalf of the EAG Group of States. I will give a short statement concerning harm of the hate speech.

Some values are so basic to any form of good life, or so central to the community's moral identity, that no state can remain neutral with respect to them. A state committed to the human dignity, gender and race equality, or the spirit of free inquiry, cannot be neutral between the forms of speech or behavior that defend or discredit them.

Hate speech strikes at the root of the shared communal life and represents a gross misuse of the right to free speech. It express and promotes hostility to a group of persons, delegitimizes their membership of the political community, subjects them to harassment and intimidation, inhibits their participation in communal life, and damages their sense of dignity and equal life chances.

The right to free speech makes no sense outside a moral community. Although free speech is an important basic value, it is not the only one. Human dignity, equality, freedom to live without harassment and intimidation, social harmony, national unity in a way and protection of one's good name and honor are also central of the good life and deserve to be safeguarded. Since these values conflict either inherently or in particular contexts, they need to be balanced.

**Hate speech is unacceptable for both intrinsic and instrumental reasons, for what it is and what it does. Hate speech violates the dignity of the members of the target group by stigmatizing them, denying their capacity to live as responsible members of society, and then using them to the uniform specimen of the relevant racial, ethnical, or religious group.**

Then victims rightly conclude that the political community, without action, either shares that implied sentiments or does not consider their dignity, self-respect, and well-being important enough to warrant action. In either case, it forfeits its legitimacy in their eyes and can claim neither to represent them, nor to deserve their loyalty.

Hate speech is unacceptable on consequentialist grounds as well. It encourages a climate in which, over time, some groups come to be demonized and their discriminatory treatment is accepted as normal.

The violence that is implicit in hate speech then comes to the fore. If anything can be said about a group of person with impunity, then it can also be done to it. Although law and international standards that we are speaking about has its obvious limits, it has an important role in discouraging hate speech. It affirms the community's commitment to certain basic values, lays down norms of decency, reassures vulnerable groups.

Protection of vulnerable groups helps create a climate of civility and prevents the normal intergroup conflicts and prejudice of multi-ethnical society from getting out of control. Law is most effective when it is part of a wider anti-discrimination strategy accompanied by a campaign of public education, careful drafted and directed against clearly defined forms of hate speech. Now we're speaking of in sport, of course.

But the best strategy is to act decisively in the early stages when hate-based organizations have not built up powerful networks and support, and their rhetoric has not coarsened public sensibility.

Proscription of the hate speech plays a particularly important role in preventing this kind of political mobilization of hostility against particular groups.

# Remarks by Ambassador Claver Gatete, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Rwanda to the United Nations on behalf of the African Group of States



Madam Chairperson, speaking on behalf of the African Group, and we are pleased that we are invited to deliver a statement on this important day.

Madam Chair, again, as those who spoke before me, today marks the 74th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, which happens to be the first human rights treaty adopted by the General Assembly in the aftermath of the World War.

This annual commemoration is an important opportunity for all of us to honor the victims of genocide. Genocide is an inhumane crime that affects every fabric of our societies. It is an assault on our most fundamental values. Today, as we remember and honor the victims of the crime of genocide, we must fight and find ways of preventing genocide at the core of our common values.

Therefore, this treaty is imperative and remains relevant, particularly as we continue to work towards preventing genocide and its root causes. At the same time, we attempt to prevent other atrocities still being perpetrated with impunity with no regard to human life. And as we work to address the root causes of the crime, we should not forget the dangers of hate speech and discrimination which are all warning signs of genocide.

Madam Chairperson, again, this annual commemoration affords us an opportunity to reflect and to continue the fight against genocide, genocide denial, its ideology, impunity, and assure that we never again experience such heinous crimes against humanity.

As a Rwandan, in this regard I would like to pay tribute to the victims of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi that happened in my country.

We appreciate all efforts supported, efforts from other countries that supported the Republic of Rwanda to move forward. We should therefore redouble our effort in fighting genocide ideology, its denial, as well as impunity.

If genocide ideology persists, its denial will continue unabated, and impunity will reign.

This task should be the responsibility of both the government and the people. It is the collective responsibility of the regional organizations and member states, civil society organizations, youth organizations, women's movement, media, and academia, to fight this vice.

**We should collectively combat the genocide impunity, hate speech, and work towards resolving this issue once and for all. This commemoration should again remind us that past never be repeated. It should challenge us to deal with the present and the future in our efforts towards achieving peace for all of us. We must remain constantly vigilant of key political, human rights, humanity, and social and economic developments worldwide to identify early warning signals that contribute to atrocity crimes.**

Madam Chair, the African Union has tried its best. It has passed resolutions encouraging countries that have not done so to investigate, arrest, persecute, and extradite genocide fugitives currently residing in some countries.

It's our hope that this call will be heeded to and bring the perpetrators to account for their crimes so that the crime is not repeated again.

# THE ROLE OF SPORTS IN COUNTERING HATE SPEECH

*PUBLISHED APRIL 2023*

as delivered at the high-level United Nations event held on 9 December 2022