

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Beyond Awareness: Making Elder Abuse Prevention Work

*A Side Event at the
19th session of the Conference of States Parties to
the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*

Thursday, 11 June 2026, 1:15 – 2:30 p.m.
United Nations Headquarters, Conference Room (tbd)
Live on UN Web TV

**BEYOND AWARENESS:
MAKING ELDER ABUSE
PREVENTION WORK**

11 June 2026 | 1:15 - 2:30 pm ET
UNHQ, New York | Live on UN Web TV

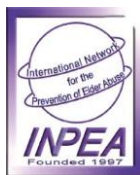
**World Elder Abuse
Awareness Day**

Speakers listed on the poster:
- Dr. Lisa Scott-McKenzie, Commissioner, NYC Department for the Aging
- Dr. Susan Somers, President, International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA)
- Safiga Kara, Executive Director, Generations Calgary
- Ritga Gabrehiwana, Human Rights Expert, Ethiopia
- Yoelyong Park, Deputy Director of Division of Rights Promotion for Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Health and Welfare, Republic of Korea
- Rio Hada, OHCHR
- Amal Abou Rafeh, DESA

Background

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD), observed annually on 15 June, serves as a global call to recognize and address elder abuse as both a human rights violation and a growing policy challenge in ageing societies. In 2026, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), together with the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), will mark WEAAD through a side event held on the margins of the nineteenth session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (COSP19), at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

Holding the event alongside COSP19 provides a timely opportunity to engage a global audience already convened in New York, bringing together policymakers, practitioners, and advocates from across regions. It also reflects the need to work beyond policy silos. As populations age, increasing numbers of persons with disabilities are also ageing, and many older persons



experience disability later in life. This intersection calls for stronger alignment between ageing and disability agendas, particularly in areas such as protection, care, and community-based support - central to addressing elder abuse, the core focus of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

Elder abuse remains widely under-recognized and under-reported. It can take many forms—physical, psychological, financial, and neglect—and often occurs in contexts where individuals lack visibility, support, or access to services. Addressing it therefore requires more than awareness or isolated interventions. It calls for systems that can both prevent abuse and respond effectively when it occurs, while upholding the dignity, autonomy, and human rights of older persons.

Objectives

The event will bring together local government leadership, national policy, community practice, and human rights perspectives to explore what works, and what needs to change, to better address elder abuse in practice.

Specifically, the event will:

- **Draw on frontline experience** from local government to highlight how risks are identified and addressed, and where service gaps remain.
- **Share national policy approaches** on how ageing societies are strengthening systems across care, protection, and support.
- **Highlight community-based solutions** that reduce isolation and strengthen connections as key factors in addressing abuse.
- **Reflect on accountability and safeguards**, including how human rights frameworks can support stronger responses and visibility.
- **Identify practical ways to better connect these efforts**, so that policies, services, and community initiatives work together more effectively.

Speakers and Perspectives

- **Dr. Lisa Scott-McKenzie, Commissioner, New York City Department for the Aging**, will share practical insights from New York City on how local systems identify and respond to elder abuse, while strengthening services that support older persons to live safely and with dignity in their communities.

- **Ms. Yookyong Park, Deputy Director, Division of Rights Promotion for Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Health and Welfare, Republic of Korea**, will present national approaches to addressing elder abuse, including how policy frameworks across health, long-term care, and social protection can both prevent risks and improve response mechanisms.
- **Ms. Safiqa Kara, Executive Director, Generations** Calgary, Canada, will highlight community-based initiatives that reduce isolation, strengthen intergenerational connections, and create environments that both prevent abuse and support well-being.
- **Ms. Rigbe Gebrehawaria, Human Rights Expert and Candidate for the 2026 COSP Elections, Ethiopia**, will bring a regional perspective from Africa, reflecting on emerging responses, visibility of elder abuse, and the role of human rights mechanisms in strengthening protection and accountability.

Focus of the Discussion

The discussion will center on a simple but critical question: **What needs to be in place for societies to effectively prevent, identify, and respond to elder abuse?**

In doing so, it will:

- Examine how system gaps contribute to both risk and weak responses
- Highlight practical experiences across local, national, and community levels
- Identify ways to strengthen coordination across ageing, disability and human rights frameworks
- Explore how policies and services can better uphold dignity, autonomy, and protection

By connecting real-world experience with ongoing intergovernmental discussions, the event aims to position addressing elder abuse as a shared responsibility, requiring coordinated action across sectors, systems, and levels of governance. This is particularly timely in 2026, as Member States undertake the fifth review and appraisal of the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA), while discussions also advance in the Human Rights Council through the intergovernmental working group on the human rights of older persons. World Elder Abuse Awareness Day provides a valuable opportunity to bring practical insights and lived realities into both processes, helping to inform efforts to strengthen implementation, enhance protection, and support the dignity and well-being of older persons.