

For immediate release

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has warned that “in today’s world of deep division, mistrust and conflict, we remain confronted by the enduring menace of this atrocious crime (); in danger of forgetting the dark lessons of the past”, in a message to mark the 75th anniversary of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, and the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime.

“This year’s theme reminds us that the Convention and its timeless message must remain a living force in our world, calling us to uphold its solemn promise. Keeping this promise requires all governments ratifying and fully implementing the Convention, while ensuring that perpetrators are held to account. It requires

The Special Adviser also drew attention to individuals and organizations who are taking on the responsibility to take positive action to promote a culture of peace and non-violence that includes the respect for diversity and non-discrimination, very often in the face of adversity and sometimes danger. They were honored at the event as the 2023 Raphael Lemkin Champions of Prevention. This group includes individuals and organizations from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Cambodia, Iraq, Rwanda, Sudan, United States of America and Cambodia. It also includes a member of a Rohingya women organization and a regional civil society group working for the protection of Roma in Europe.

The event comprised three panel discussions. The first panel, focused on accountability, included remarks by Ms. Silvia Fernandez de Gurmendi, President of the Assembly of States for the Rome Statute; Mr. Karim A. A. Khan, Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court; Mr. Serge Brammertz, Prosecutor of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals; and Mr. Christoph Safferling, Director of the International Nuremberg Principles Academy. Panelists underlined that, while progress has been made in the use of the Convention in legal proceedings, gaps persist. It is only through concerted efforts and collective commitment that the protection of individuals can be prioritized