



United Nations

Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs



NGO Committee on Ageing
GENEVA



THE GLOBAL ALLIANCE
FOR THE RIGHTS OF OLDER PEOPLE

INTERNATIONAL NETWORK FOR THE PREVENTION OF ELDER ABUSE (INPEA)

ADDRESSING ABUSE OF OLDER ADULTS IN LONG TERM CARE FACILITIES: THROUGH DATA AND ACTION

*Monday, June 16, 2025
1:15 pm - 2:45 pm ET*

**2025 INTERNATIONAL WEAAD COMMEMORATION -
A VIRTUAL EVENT**

Description

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD), observed annually on June 15 since 2006, was initiated by INPEA in partnership with WHO and officially recognized by the UN in 2011. This virtual WEAAD 2025 event will address the abuse of older adults in institutional settings such as nursing homes and long-term care facilities. Despite growing awareness, staff shortages and lack of reliable data continue to hinder prevention efforts. The panel will highlight both challenges and promising practices to strengthen protections for older people's rights and dignity.

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SPEAKERS



Welcome remarks : Amal Abou Rafeh

Chief of the Programme on Ageing Section, UN DESA

Amal Abou Rafeh is Chief of Programme on Ageing Unit at the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs in New York. She serves on the Secretariat of the General Assembly's Open-ended Working Group on Ageing and is a member of the Steering Committee of the Titchfield City Group on Ageing-related Statistics and Age-disaggregated Data.

Amal joined the United Nations in 2001, working in the areas of social policy, sustainable development and demography, and served on the Secretariats of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002) and the High-level Meeting on Youth (2011). She held positions in Beirut and New York. Before joining the United Nations, Amal lectured and taught on analysis of social and demographic data.

Amal was born in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and holds a Masters of Science in Population Studies from the American University of Beirut.



Moderator: Sara Salman

Population Affairs Officer at UN ESCWA

Sara Salman is a public policy specialist, with particular expertise in ageing, migration, and democratic governance in the Arab region. She has extensive experience in institutional strengthening, developing innovative knowledge products, and managing international projects.

Dr. Salman has worked with a number of international organizations including the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UNESCWA). She currently leads UNESCWA's work on ageing and migration in the region. Sara received her PhD degree from American University, Washington D.C. in 2017. Sara is fluent in Arabic and English.

PANELISTS



Natasa Todorovic, MPH

INPEA Reg Rep Europe, Red Cross of Serbia

Natasa Todorovic is a Psychologist, Master of Public Health, and PhD candidate at the Medical School of Belgrade University. For over two decades, her work has focused on the effects of demographic aging, with particular attention to elder abuse, long-term care systems, and the role of informal caregivers. As an active researcher, she explores violence against older people—especially women—and the accessibility of long-term care. She is a committed advocate for the improved quality of life of older persons through her work with the Red Cross of Serbia and numerous international networks.

Natasa represents Europe in the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA) and serves as President of the Gerontological Society of Serbia. She also co-leads the Care and Support Thematic Action Group within HelpAge International's Healthy Ageing Platform. She is the co-author of the first regional research on violence against older women in the Western Balkans, Ukraine, and Moldova, as well as the first study on compassion fatigue in long-term care in Serbia. Natasa has received multiple awards for her contributions, including the Rosalie S. Wolf Award (2018) and the Andjelka Milic Award (2024), and she is co-author of numerous scientific articles and more than 20 publications.



Claudia Mahler, PhD

UN Independent Expert on the enjoyment
of all human rights by older persons, TBC

Ms. Mahler (Austria) assumed her role as an Independent Expert in May 2020. She has been a senior researcher in economic, social, and cultural rights for the German Institute for Human Rights since 2010. She was also a visiting professor at the Alice Salomon Hochschule in 2020-2021.

From 2001 to 2009, Ms. Mahler conducted research at the Human Rights Centre of the University of Potsdam, where her main fields were human rights education, minority rights, and the law of asylum. In 2000 she was appointed Vice President of the Human Rights Commission for Tyrol and Vorarlberg.

She has also worked as a lecturer in human rights law and as a consultant to OHCHR in Geneva. 1997-2001, she was an assistant at the Leopold-Franzens-University Innsbruck, Austria, in Criminal Law and Criminal Procedures. Ms. Mahler received her doctoral degree in 2000.



Lucia Vidovićová, PhD

Masaryk Univ | Faculty of Social Studies, Research Institute for Labour and
Social Affairs RILSA, INPEA Rep to Czech Republic

Mgr. Lucie Vidovićová, PhD. is a sociologist and social gerontologist. She is an assistant professor at the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University, where she co-founded the Centre for Research on Ageing CERA. Since 2001 she has also been working with the RILSA Research Institute of Labour and Social Affairs, where she heads the Department of Social Policy and Social Work.

She was elected President of the Research Committee on Ageing (RC11) of the International Sociological Association and chairs Committee on the Rights of the Older Persons at the Government Council for Human Rights (CZ). Her long-term research interests include the sociology of ageing, age discrimination, active ageing and social exclusion. Lucie conducts research for national and European organizations, works as a consultant for a number of implementation projects, and collaborates with various governmental and non-governmental actors in the field of senior advocacy and science popularization. She has experience as an informal carer.



Wenche Malmedal, PhD

Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences,
Department of Public Health and Nursing NTNU, INPEA Rep to Norway

Wenche Karin Malmedal is born in 1957 and holds a position as professor at Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Trondheim, Norway, Department of Public Health and Nursing. She is a specialist in psychiatric nursing, with a PhD in health science. Dr. Malmedal has since the early nineties been particularly concerned about elder abuse and published several articles and book chapters on the topic. The title of her doctoral theses (2013) is "Inadequate Care, Abuse and Neglect in Norwegian Nursing Homes".

Dr. Malmedal has been a member of several national advisory boards, as well as a frequent invited speaker nationally and internationally, about the elder abuse topic for health authorities, NGO's and others. She is also a consultant for the Norwegian Pensioners' Association. Moreover, Dr. Malmedal has been invited as a guest lecturer at e.g. UCSF, School of Nursing, USA; Jiao Tong University, Shanghai, China; Tokyo University, School of Medicine, Japan; USC, Los Angeles, Department of Family Medicine; and Health College, Cuprija, Serbia. She is currently leading the research group: "Ageing and older persons' health" and the Elder Abuse Research Team at NTNU. Dr. Malmedal is the national representative from Norway in INPEA (The International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse).

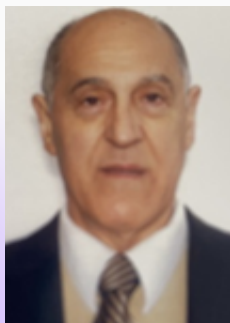


Eilon Caspi, PhD

Gerontologist and Elder Mistreatment Researcher,
Director, Dementia Behavior Consulting LLC

Eilon Caspi, Ph.D., is a gerontologist and dementia behavior specialist. He is the founder and director of Dementia Behavior Consulting LLC and a founding member, advisor, and board member of Elder Voice Family Advocates. He currently works as an assistant research professor at the Institute for Collaboration on Health, Intervention, and Policy, University of Connecticut. He serves as a board member of the Long Term Care Community Coalition (NYC). He worked his entire adult life in the aging field, starting as a nurse aide in 1994 in a nursing home where his grandfather lived. Both his grandmothers had dementia and lived in nursing homes.

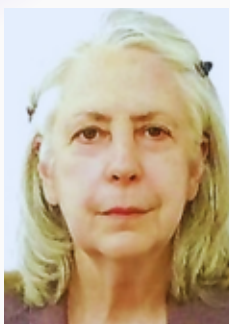
Over the years, he served in various roles, including social worker, consultant, applied researcher, educator, author, volunteer, and elder care advocate. Over the past 13 years, he developed and implemented a comprehensive program for the prevention of the prevalent and harmful phenomenon of resident-to-resident incidents in long-term care homes. He regularly presents on the phenomenon at local, state, national, and international professional and scientific forums, nursing homes, long-term care trade associations, the Alzheimer's Association (U.S. and Canada), the Veterans Administration, the Office of Ombudsman for long-term care, state survey agencies, and coroner offices. He co-directed the first documentary film entitled Fighting for Dignity on injurious and fatal resident-to-resident incidents in dementia (Terra Nova Films).



Robert Brent, PhD

Professor Emeritus, Fordham University, and LTC Ombudsman

Robert J. Brent is a Professor of Economics Emeritus at Fordham University where he taught for 42 years. His specialty is Cost-Benefit Analysis, which involves the evaluation of government expenditures from a social perspective. His current research is on the evaluation of dementia interventions. He is an INPEA representative at the UN, and a Certified Ombudsman Volunteer for New York's Long Term Care Program.



Closing: Susan B. Somers, JD

President, INPEA

Ms. Somers earned a Law Degree in 1984 from Albany Law School, Albany, NY, and holds a Certificate of Gerontology Studies.

For two decades, her practice areas concentrated on Civil Rights, Family, and Elder Issues. She served as Assist. Deputy Attorney General for the State of New York, Consumer Frauds and Elder Protection Unit. She also served as State Director of the NYS OCFS Bureau of Adult Protective Services.

She is currently President of the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA), an International NGO with special consultative status at the UN, which launched the first Annual World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on June 15, 2006.

Her focus is on promoting older people's human rights to end abuse, neglect, and violence globally through advocacy with UN Member States and International NGOs. She has an interest in addressing harmful cultural and traditional practices and raising awareness relative to older women, widows, and abuse. She advocates promoting a New universal, legally binding Convention on the Rights of Older Persons within the United Nations framework.

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INPEA

INPEA is celebrating over two decades (26 years) of advocacy, education and research for the protection and promotion of the human rights of older persons.