



Chair Report

Human Rights Council

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The primary role of the Human Rights Council is to be an inter-governmental body within the United Nations system responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights around the globe and for addressing situations of human rights violations and making recommendations on them.

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/hrc/Pages/Home.aspx>

REPORT: Combating Racial Inequality

Introduction

Racism is defined as “prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against a person or people on the basis of their membership in a particular racial or ethnic group, typically one that is a minority or marginalized” (Oxford Languages). It is the belief that characteristics and abilities can be attributed to people simply on the basis of their race and that some racial groups are superior to others. Racism and discrimination have been used as powerful weapons encouraging fear or hatred of others in times of conflict and war, and even during economic downturns. These inequalities are fundamentally about differential access to power, resources, protections, and rights.

General Overview

Racism is present in many forms that branch off or are a subsection of the main issue. Xenophobia is a “fear and hatred of strangers or foreigners or of anything that is strange or foreign” (Merriam-Webster). Discrimination is defined as “the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people or things, especially on the grounds of race, age, or sex.” Prejudice is an irrational attitude of hostility directed against an individual, a group, a race, or their supposed characteristics” (Merriam - Webster). Genocide is “the deliberate killing of a large number of people from a particular nation or ethnic group with the aim of destroying that nation or group” (Oxford Languages). Any and all of these different tendencies lead to inequality between the people living in this world because of the color of their skin.



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This problem is widespread and extends to almost every country. For examples, There is a big pattern of systemic racism and disregard for Black lives in the United States, where Black communities have long suffered from violence at the hands of the state through slavery, legal segregation, police brutality, and mass incarceration. Brazilian police in Rio de Janeiro alone killed 606 people, three-quarters of whom were young, Black men from the favelas. In Palestine, Israel's excessive use of force and shoot-to-kill policy against Palestinians persist, recently manifesting in the killing of young Iyad Hallaq and others. In South Africa, Black urban shack dwellers face the remnants of Apartheid as their leaders are frequently killed when they attempt to organize their communities. In Guatemala, the Mayan healer Domingo Choc was accused of witchcraft, tortured and burnt to death by a mob.

Racism and racial discrimination has many adverse effects on not only the individuals it impacts, but also society as a whole. The societal tendency of looking at someone's skin color as a signifier of their worth as a human being leaves them vulnerable to mistreatment and ultimately, an unequal style of life. Everything from economic stability, career opportunities, quality of education, to mental health, being discriminated against affects someone's entire life. This extends further to affecting the society as a whole, in terms of feelings of unity and the economy.

Major Parties Involved:

- **Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR):** department of the Secretariat of the United Nations that works to promote and protect the human rights that are guaranteed under international law and stipulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 (Wikipedia)
- **United Nations General Assembly Third Committee:** Deals with human rights, humanitarian affairs, and social matters
- **Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD):** a body of experts that monitors that the state parties implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- **Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Chile, Ecuador, Greece, Kazakhstan, Lithuania and Serbia** reported that discrimination on the grounds of race has been declared punishable by law. (un.org)
- **Uruguay** has adopted a law on affirmative action policies to ensure equal access to higher education and to the public labour market, stipulating a quota of at least 8 per cent for people of African descent. (un.org)



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- The Congress of Deputies of **Spain** has approved a law on the memory of slavery, with the recognition and support of black communities, African people and people of African descent in Spain. (un.org)
- **Italy** reported that its foreign policy supports investment in African countries. (un.org)
- **The Netherlands** reported that its anti-discrimination policy shifted from a specific ethnicity-oriented policy to a problem-oriented policy, encompassing all forms of discrimination. (un.org)
- In **Mexico**, the national programme for equality and non-discrimination 2014-2018 includes 13 lines of action for the Afro-descendant population, including to increase the participation of Afro-descendant and indigenous women in the political sphere and in positions of popular representation. (un.org)

Timeline of Key Events

[1619]: The first slaves are brought to the United States of America, the start of centuries of suffering.

[1919]: After World War I, the Treaty of Versailles was signed. Japan, one of the signing countries, expresses that equality of all races should be included as a clause. It is ultimately rejected.

[1941]: Nazi Germany begins its genocide of European Jews. Around 6,000,000 Jews would be killed by the end of World War II.

[1948]: The UN proclaims the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

[1969]: The beginning of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

[1978]: World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held in Geneva.

[1979]: The General Assembly decided to dedicate a week annually to be recognized for the ongoing battles against discrimination and those it harms.

[1983]: 2nd World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held in Geneva.

[1990-1994]: Negotiations held to eliminate apartheid system in South Africa.



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[1994]: In Rwanda, the Tutsi minority was targeted by the Hutu majority and suffered 500,000 to 600,000 casualties.

[2001]: 3rd World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held in Durban.

[2016]: The Myanmar government begins a series of prosecutions against the Rohingya people, "amongst the world's least wanted" (United Nations). This genocide is still ongoing.

Past Attempts at Resolving This Issue:

Universal Declaration of Human Rights: A proclamation by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. Set, for the first time, fundamental human rights to be universally protected.

International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination: A Convention aimed at fostering the elimination of racial discrimination and the promotion of understanding among all races

United Nations General Assembly Third Committee: Emphasizes that any doctrine of racial superiority is scientifically false, morally condemnable, socially unjust and dangerous and must be rejected (un.org).

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR): hosts annual fellowships for people of African descent in order to raise awareness on racial disparities. This provides participants with a learning opportunity to deepen their understanding of the United Nations human rights system, with a focus on issues of particular relevance to people of African descent.

The General Assembly: In 1979, adopted a programme of activities to be undertaken during the second half of the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination. They also decided that a week of solidarity with the peoples struggling against racism and racial discrimination, beginning on 21 March, would be organized annually in all States.

Suggested Websites

- <https://www.un.org/en/observances/decade-people-african-descent/actions-taken>



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- <https://www.racialequitytools.org/fundamentals/history-of-racism-and-movements/global-history-of-racism>
- <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cerd.aspx>
- <https://www.un.org/en/observances/end-racism-day>
- <https://www.un.org/en/observances/decade-people-african-descent/actions-taken>
- <https://www.openglobalrights.org/confronting-systemic-racism-globally/>