UNHRC

Background Guide

EMUN

AGENDA

Combating Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance

Index

Message from the Executive Board

Greetings delegates,

Though we shall try our level best to give you all a very comprehensive guide, however, the responsibility of reading between the lines and joining the dots lies on you. We as moderators can just bring information on the table; it's on you how you wish to pursue that information. So, in this guide, we shall bring in a wide range of information to your notice, ranging from official statements to scholarly views. However, the responsibility of prioritizing what to focus on and not is totally yours.

When we talk of **prioritizing information**, what we mean is not to prioritize information according to what you think should be focused, but prioritizing information according to what your country thinks should be focused. Before coming for the conference, it is very important to break the larger agenda into smaller subtopics and ask questions to yourself about the agenda. Making moderated caucus topics beforehand would give you an edge in moderately larger councils like the **United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC).**

It is also crucial to enhance your leadership skills and lobbying capacity since we would give equal importance to overall participation in the committee. We would take this opportunity to elaborate upon the criteria for judgment which we will follow in the committee. We hardly see Executive Board Members spell out the criteria for judgment in the committee for various reasons. However, since we wish to ensure a fair simulation, we will elaborate upon the criteria we wish to follow and institute in the committee to give an equal footing to every delegate participating. The criteria for judgment in the committee are as follows:

1. Research
2. Analysis
3. Guidance of debate
4. Adherence to foreign policy
5. Lobbying
6. Points and Yields
7. Documentation

We shall, to the best of our abilities, ensure that a fair simulation is conducted and there is ample scope for fruitful and meaningful discussion which paves the way for a nuanced learning experience.

Regards,

SASHREEK REDDY (CHAIRPERSON)
VAIJAYANTHI REDDY (VICE CHAIRPERSON)

Introduction to Committee

The United Nations Human Rights Council was first founded in 2006, to address the standards for human rights and discuss their protection. The HRC falls under the Office of the High Commissioner of Refugees (OHCHR). The HRC has grown overall to represent and discuss the protection and continuance of various human rights as well as deteriorations of human rights in specific regions.

The 47 member states of the HRC are generally elected by the General Assembly. Led by elected President Federico Villegas, the HRC meets at the UN in Geneva in order to discuss any and all issues relevant to the continuation of human rights around the globe.11 The UNHRC was established in place of the Commission on Human Rights, which was criticized for its inefficiency.

In recent years, the HRC has become known for its involvement in the human rights situations of various countries including Israel, Myanmar, and Syria. Recent meetings have also focused on the violation of women's rights in Iran as well as growing concerns over increasing limitations of rights in the region.

The main objective of the United Nations Human Rights Council is to investigate allegations of human rights abuse in member states of the United Nations and ensure that the following human rights issues are addressed and upheld to the maximum extent.

1. Freedom of assembly
2. Freedom of expression and free speech
3. Freedom of religion
4. Protection of women's rights
5. Protecting rights of LGBT community and that of racial and ethnic minority

Notable work from UNHRC

The struggle against racism is an important aspect of work. UN Human Rights provides extensive support to all the mechanisms involved in the UN fight against racism, and works with them to make the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action a reality.

UN coordinates the Programme of Activities for the International Decade for People of African Descent. In 2020 they were mandated to establish a dedicated team to work towards the effective implementation of Human Rights Council resolution 43/1 towards transformative change for racial justice and equality.

In the wake of the George Floyd murder that set off the Black Lives Matter movement in the summer of 2020, the Human Rights Council called for an urgent debate on "current racially inspired human rights violations, systemic racism, police brutality and violence against peaceful protests". Through Human Rights Council Resolution 43/1, the UN High Commissioner is mandated to look at systemic racism and human rights violations by law enforcement agencies against Africans and people of African descent, and to contribute to accountability and redress for victims. The 48th session of the Human Rights Council focused on digital technologies deployed to advance the xenophobic and racially discriminatory treatment and exclusion of migrants, refugees, and stateless persons.

Introduction to Agenda

Racism and racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance all occur on a daily basis, hindering progress for millions of people around the world. Since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the International Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (1965), the United Nations has made the struggle against racism a matter of priority

Racism and intolerance destroy lives and communities. The United Nations has been concerned with this issue since its foundation, and the prohibition of racial discrimination is enshrined in all core international human rights instruments. When States ratify these instruments, they agree to obligations such as eradicating discrimination in the public and private spheres. States also agree to adopt special measures to eliminate conditions which cause or help to perpetuate racial discrimination. While progress has been made in overcoming racism worldwide, much remains to be achieved

Racism, Bias, and Discrimination

Racism is a form of prejudice that assumes that the members of racial categories have distinctive characteristics and that these differences result in some racial groups being inferior to others. Racism generally includes negative emotional reactions to members of the group, acceptance of negative stereotypes, and racial discrimination against individuals; in some cases it leads to violence. It is the **belief** that some races are better than others, or the unfair treatment of someone because of his or her race .

Discrimination refers to the differential treatment of the members of different ethnic, religious, national, or other groups. Discrimination is usually the behavioral manifestation of prejudice and therefore involves negative, hostile, and injurious **treatment** of members of rejected groups. Race discrimination is unfair treatment of someone because of their race.

Racism is not the same as racial discrimination. Although , racial discrimination is sometimes referred to as "racism", this creates confusion and is not correct. Racism is a combination of racial prejudice (or discrimination) plus **power**. By "power", one is talking about who is recognized and accepted as having power in society as a whole

Xenophobia vs. Racism Meaning

Xenophobia is "**fear** and hatred of strangers or foreigners or of anything that is strange or foreign." **Racism** has a slightly broader range of meanings, including "a belief that race is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent **superiority** of a particular race," and "a political or social system founded on racism." It should be noted that the meanings of these two words are sufficiently different that a person (or thing, such as a policy) may very easily be both racist and xenophobic.

The term "xenophobia" comes from the Greek words "phobos" which means "fear" and "xenos" which means stranger or foreign

Latest reports By OHCHR

A/HRC/51/53: (08/2022)
Promotion and protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of Africans and of people of African descent against excessive use of force and other human rights violations by law enforcement officers through transformative change for racial justice and equality

"In the present report, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights sets out promising initiatives in different countries, including measures to recognize and seek to address racism beyond the sum of individual acts and to begin to address past legacies. They reflect an increased willingness to take concrete steps to address racial discrimination endured by Africans and people of African descent, despite complex national contexts, setbacks arising from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and other major global challenges.

The High Commissioner concludes, however, that for the most part these initiatives fall short of comprehensive evidence - based approaches – grounded in intersectional and intergenerational analyses – that address systemic racism, including structural and institutional factors, in State institutions, the private sector and societal structures across multiple interconnected areas.

The High Commissioner therefore reiterates the call for States to step up the implementation of the 20 actions contained in the agenda towards transformative change for racial justice and equality, noting that greater political will is needed to accelerate action that delivers prompt and consequential results for Africans and people of African descent in every sphere of life."

A/HRC/47/53: (07/2021)
Promotion and protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of Africans and of people of African descent against excessive use of force and other human rights violations by law enforcement officers

"The murder of George Floyd on 25 May 2020 and the ensuing mass protests worldwide have marked a watershed in the fight against racism. In some countries, there is now broader acknowledgment of the systemic nature of the racism that affects the lives of Africans and people of African descent and of the need to address the past in order to secure future conditions of life that uphold the dignity and rights of all. It is our collective duty to address these issues – immediately and everywhere.

Prepared pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 43/1 and in recognition of the unprecedented opportunity for change, the present comprehensive report – to be read in conjunction with an accompanying conference room paper – presents an agenda towards transformative change for racial justice and equality.

The objectives of this transformative agenda in the annex are to reverse cultures of denial, dismantle systemic racism and accelerate the pace of action; end impunity for human rights violations by law enforcement officials and close trust deficits in this area; ensure that the voices of people of African descent and those who stand up against racism are heard and that their concerns are acted upon; and acknowledge and confront legacies, including through accountability and redress.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights calls upon States to translate this agenda into action plans and concrete measures developed through national dialogues and with the meaningful participation of people of African descent to address the specific histories, lived experiences and current realities in each State. The Office of the High Commissioner looks forward to working with States and the Human Rights

Council to implement this agenda, including by: strengthening assistance to States and other stakeholders; documenting and following up on specific incidents; consulting and partnering with victims, survivors and affected communities; and providing guidance for relevant racial justice processes in States, for which additional dedicated capacity is needed.

The High Commissioner also recommends that the Human Rights Council sustain its close engagement on these issues and establish a specific, time-bound mechanism, or that it strengthen an existing mechanism by providing it with additional capacity, in order to advance racial justice and equality in the context of law enforcement in all parts of the world, including by examining relevant patterns, incidents, policies and processes, such as those highlighted in the present report and in the accompanying conference room paper."
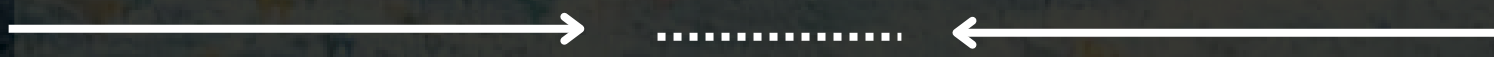
CASE STUDY 1:

The Windrush Scandal:

A Case Study on Institutional Racism and the Mistreatment of Minority Communities:

The Windrush controversy, which surfaced in 2018, showed the unfair treatment of Caribbean nationals who had been residing legally in the UK for decades. The case raised awareness of the governmental policies' structural shortcomings and the harm that institutional racism causes to minority groups. The context, significant incidents, consequences, and takeaways from the Windrush affair are all examined in this case study. Historical Context: They received permission to live and work legally in the UK for all time. The HMT Empire Windrush, which transported the initial wave of Caribbean immigrants, is where the name "Windrush" initially appeared.

Changes in Government Policy and Failures: In an effort to reduce illegal immigration, the UK government has introduced stricter immigration regulations in recent years. Measures requiring people to present proof of their legal status were implemented by the Immigration Act of 2014. The Windrush generation, however, suffered significantly as a result of the government's bad management of these initiatives.

Detentions, Denials, and Deportations: The crisis erupted when it became clear that a large number of Windrush immigrants were unable to present the essential papers to confirm their status because they had come as minors and had never been given official paperwork. As a result, people were unjustly held, refused access to public services like housing and healthcare, and faced the possibility of being deported to nations where they had not resided in years.

The Windrush affair exposed the existence of institutional racism in the UK's immigration system. People with Caribbean ancestry were disproportionately harmed by the policies and practices, which were biased in a systematic way and did not adequately recognise their contributions to British society

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Consequences and Reforms: The Windrush crisis forced the UK to review its immigration laws and procedures. To give people impacted financial relief, the government created the Windrush Compensation Scheme. To avoid similar injustices in the future, initiatives were also taken to expedite the paperwork process and enhance communication. The case sparked debates about racial equality and the significance of welcoming immigration laws.
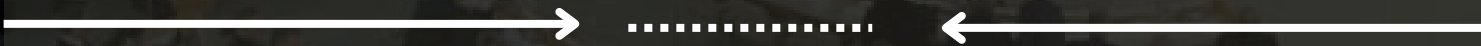
CASE STUDY 2:

Apartheid in South Africa:

Background: Apartheid was a system of racial segregation and discrimination enforced by the National Party government in South Africa from 1948 to 1994. The policy aimed to maintain white minority rule and systematically oppressed the majority Black population through strict racial classifications, forced relocation, separate amenities, and limited civil rights.

Historical Context: a. Origins: Apartheid arose as a reaction to the National Party's political goal, which sought to uphold white minority rule as well as white South Africans' social and economic benefits.
The government passed a number of laws that enforced racial segregation and discrimination, classifying people into racial groups (White, Black, Coloured, and Indian), and establishing restrictions on where they might live, work, study, and socialize.

Apartheid's Impact:

a. compelled Removals: Apartheid policies compelled millions of Black South Africans to flee their homes and communities. The Group regions Act set aside distinct regions for certain racial groups, resulting in the loss of vibrant villages and the establishment of racially separated townships and bantustans.

b. Segregation and Discrimination: Apartheid imposed separate amenities based on racial classifications, such as schools, hospitals, and public facilities. Inadequate services and limited access to excellent education, healthcare, and economic opportunities plagued black South Africans.

c. Denial of Rights: Apartheid laws deprived Black South Africans of essential human rights such as the right to vote, freedom of movement, and expression. To enforce cooperation and stifle dissent the government used harsh security forces

Resistance and International Pressure:

a. Domestic Activism: South African activists, including Nelson Mandela, Steve Biko, and Desmond Tutu, spearheaded resistance movements against apartheid. Organizations like the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) played pivotal roles in advocating for equality and challenging apartheid policies.

b. International Solidarity: The international community played a crucial role in pressuring the South African government through diplomatic, economic, and cultural sanctions. The Anti-Apartheid Movement and international leaders rallied support for the liberation struggle, isolating the apartheid regime.

Dismantling Apartheid:

Negotiations and Reforms: In the late 1980s and early 1990s, internal and external pressure compelled the South African government to engage in negotiations with anti-apartheid activists. Key events included the release of Nelson Mandela from prison in 1990 and the repeal of discriminatory legislation.

Conclusion:

The case of apartheid in South Africa highlights the enduring consequences of systemic racial discrimination. It serves as a reminder of the long struggle for racial equality, the power of grassroots movements and international solidarity.

CASE STUDY 3

Structural racism:

The case study details the experience of 60-year-old, uninsured African-American woman who visited the emergency department of a Chicago hospital concerned with a breast lump, but wasn't treated properly,Since her prior mammograms had been normal, the emergency medicine physician suspected an infection and discharged her with antibiotics without follow-up care or diagnostic testing. When the lump persisted and further imaging indicated breast cancer, a general surgeon removed the lump and recommended a mastectomy without telling the woman the cancer stage nor referring her to an oncologist.

But an on-site navigator from the nonprofit Metropolitan Chicago Breast Cancer Task Force was able to intervene. She reviewed the abnormal mammograms, referred her to a breast surgical oncologist at an academic medical center who then diagnosed the patients with stage III infiltrating ductal carcinoma that was able to be successfully treated without a mastectomy. "This came just in time to stop me from having my breast cut off," the woman noted.

The Metropolitan Chicago Breast Cancer Task Force was established in 2008 to close the gap in the number of deaths from breast cancer between Chicago's black and white women. By first identifying gaps in mammography access to mammography and the quality of breast cancer diagnosis and treatments, the task force initiated a city-wide public health initiative to more equitably allocate resources and expand access to care.

In 2017 the task force published data showing that since the inception of the Taskforce, the black:white breast cancer mortality disparity decreased 20% in Chicago––a result not observed in the nine other US cities with the largest African-American populations, including New York and Los Angeles.

"Although the precise reasons for this 20% drop in the black to white mortality disparity are unclear, it has highlighted the effectiveness of quality improvement in mitigating structural racism in health care." Pallok noted.

Eliminating structural racism 'at its root cause'

"To eliminate structural racism at its root cause, we must look beyond the walls of our clinics to the community. We must push for equity in other social systems –– such as housing, schools and incarceration –– that affect health outcomes," said co-author Ansell, Rush University Medical Center's senior vice president for community health equity and a founding member of the task force.

"And we must be willing to identify the health impact of racism. The biological differences between blacks and whites are tiny, yet the gaps in outcomes are simply too wide to continue to see race as a disease risk factor when the root cause is racism."
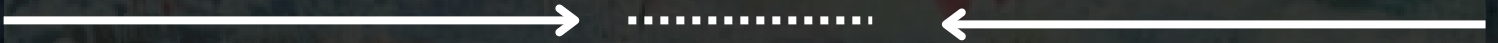
QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

● What strategies can law enforcement agencies employ to address racial profiling and ensure fair and unbiased treatment of individuals from diverse backgrounds?

● How can media and entertainment industries play a role in challenging stereotypes, promoting diversity, and combating racism and xenophobia?

● What steps can be taken to enhance the reporting and monitoring of hate crimes and incidents of racial discrimination, ensuring accountability and justice for victims?

● How can legislation and legal frameworks be strengthened to provide effective protection against racial discrimination and promote equality?

● What are the key challenges and barriers in combating racism and how can they be overcome through collaborative efforts and innovative solutions?

● What are effective ways to measure progress and evaluate the impact of initiatives aimed at combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance?

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UNRIC Library Backgrounder: Racism

Racism, xenophobia & intolerance | OHCHR

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