

Media Update

21 March 2017

United Nations

Press Release

States urged by UN experts to act now against racial profiling and incitement to racial hatred

GENEVA (21 March 2017) – UN human rights experts* are calling on governments around the world to take action now to stop fear and misinformation about minorities and migrants which are fuelling increasing incitement to racial hatred and racial profiling.

In a statement marking International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (21 March), the experts on racial discrimination say a number of measures are needed immediately including anti-racism training for police and judiciary as well as steps to eliminate institutional racism.

“Political leaders and media voices that stigmatize certain ethnic groups, migrants and refugees as prone to criminality or terrorism, or as responsible for economic malaise, encourage racial contempt that can provoke prejudice, discrimination and even verbal and physical violence,” the experts said.

“This chain of cause and effect has become all too clear, given the rising incidence of racist hate crimes in countries where minorities and migrants face increasingly hostile rhetoric,” they stressed.

The experts are also warning that differences in the treatment of people of African descent and other minorities in the law enforcement and criminal justice systems are not only ineffective, but pernicious. They say racial profiling breaches the basic right of individuals targeted thereby denying them equal protection of the law, and are urging Member States to seriously address the structural racism such people already suffer on account of their ethnicity or minority status.

“When this discrimination is normalized, it exacts an increasingly heavy toll,

as targeted individuals risk internalizing a sense of stigma and marginalization. More broadly, disproportionately high criminal conviction rates and penalties for minorities erode their trust in government institutions and reinforce the discrimination they experience,” the experts said.

“In recent years, counter-terrorism and anti-drug measures have resulted in an increased reliance on racial profiling. Economic crises in various countries have only exacerbated existing discrimination, and migrants and minority groups are being penalized through hostility, discrimination, and even violence,” the human rights experts emphasized.

They want Governments to conduct human rights and anti-racism training for law enforcement and criminal justice authorities including police officers, prison staff, immigration and asylum officers, and judges. They are also urging the collection and public reporting of disaggregated data on minorities in policing and criminal justice systems.

The experts also want to see the establishment and enforcement of laws with appropriate penalties for criminal offences motivated by racial discrimination; the elimination of institutional racial bias through strong guarantees in the justice system, together with enforcement mechanisms and remedies.

They are stressing that grassroots programs should be implemented to counter misinformation and racism, foster dialogue between different cultures, and build societies of mutual trust and respect.

“Governments must make sure that minorities, including migrants and refugees, are treated as equals and are fully integrated in society, through access to housing, healthcare, education, and social services,” the experts concluded.

(*) The experts in this statement: The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination; Mr. Mutuma Ruteere, Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance; The Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent.

ENDS

The [Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination \(CERD\)](#) is the body of independent experts that monitors implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination by its State parties.

For further information and media requests, please contact Gabriella Habtom ([+41 22 917 9193](tel:+41229179193) / ghabtom@ohchr.org) or write to cerd@ohchr.org. The [Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent](#) was established by the then Commission on Human Rights in 2002 following the World Conference against Racism held in Durban in 2001.

For further information and media requests, please contact Christina Saunders ([+41 22 928 9197](tel:+41229289197) / csaunders@ohchr.org), Niraj Dawadi ([+41 22 928 9151](tel:+41229289151) / ndawadi@ohchr.org) or write to africandescent@ohchr.org. Mr. **Mutuma Ruteere** (Kenya) was appointed by the Human Rights Council as Special Rapporteur on [contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance](#) in November 2011.

For further information and **media requests**, please contact: Thierry del Prado ([+41 22 917 92 32](tel:+41229179232) / tdelprado@ohchr.org) or Karin Hechenleitner Schacht ([+41 22 917 9232](tel:+41229179232) / 9408 / khechenleitner@ohchr.org)

For **media inquiries** related to other UN independent experts:

Bryan Wilson – Media Unit ([+ 41 22 917 9826](tel:+41229179826)/ Mediaconsultant1@ohchr.org)

You can access this press release [online](#)

Tag and share - Twitter: [@UNHumanRights](https://twitter.com/UNHumanRights) and

Facebook: [unitednationshumanrights](https://www.facebook.com/unitednationshumanrights)