



Geneva International Centre *for* Justice

**THE FIGHT AGAINST DISCRIMINATION
IS FAR FROM OVER**

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Table of Contents

Overview	1
Background	1
United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1963)	2
International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination	2
Country Examples	4
<i>Australia</i>	4
<i>Hungary</i>	6
<i>Germany</i>	8
<i>Italy</i>	10
<i>Iraq</i>	11
<i>Kingdom of the Netherlands</i>	12
<i>The United States of America</i>	15
<i>Norway</i>	17
<i>Denmark and Sweden</i>	19
Conclusion	21
<i>Large Scale Problem</i>	21
<i>GICJ Position</i>	21
<i>Concluding Remarks</i>	22
<i>Recommendations</i>	22

Overview

Although the world is constantly progressing the human rights of all individuals, the fight against racism and discrimination is far from over. In recent years, there has been a rise in hate speech and discrimination around the world. Far-right politicians and groups have capitalized off their racist agendas, convincing the masses to adopt a similar mindset. As a consequence, hate speech and discrimination are slowly becoming normalized, elevating white supremacy and tolerance for anti-migration and anti-white sentiment. This article highlights the rise in hate speech and discrimination particularly in Australia, Hungary, Italy, Germany, Iraq, the Netherlands, the United States of America, Norway, Denmark, and Sweden.

Background

Over the past ten years, discriminatory behaviors by politicians and government officials have become increasingly normalized, deteriorating the principle of upholding the dignity of all human beings. In Australia, ten parties in the 2019 federal election were listed as openly Islamophobic. In Hungary, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán called Muslim refugees “invaders”. Capitalizing on the populations’ fear of “otherness”, these politicians blatantly reject assimilation, and directly attack minority groups to elevate their agendas. Meanwhile, the intense rise of neo-Nazi provocations in Germany is alarming, with some demonstrations taking place in former concentration camps. In 2019 alone, the German government banned three different far-right groups who branded themselves as followers of Adolf Hitler, planned and carried out attacks to murder government officials and those of Jewish descent, and distributed racist and anti-Semitic writings. Then, in June 2020, half of the Italian members of the European Parliament voted against a resolution to condemn all forms of racism, hate and violence. Meanwhile, Iraq has been dealing with racial discriminatory behavior on behalf of the government and consequently, widespread destruction and terror to minority groups. In the Netherlands, Norway, Denmark, and Sweden, far-right politicians use discriminatory rhetoric which, in turn, sparks hate crimes and racism. The President of the United States of America, Donald Trump, provokes racist statements which is harmful to minority communities. In addition, the death of George Floyd, a man of African descent who was wrongfully killed at the hands of the police, drew international attention to the systemic racism that is deeply rooted in countries all around the world. With international treaties designed to

combat racism and one of the United Nations' primary reasons for existing, these countries must be reminded of the international instruments which prohibits this type of discriminatory behavior.

United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1963)¹

In 1963, the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination was adopted by the General Assembly. It outlines the body's views on racism and calls on States to end racial discrimination and take direct and efficient efforts to consistently condemn racism and promote tolerance.

This declaration was founded because despite world progress, discrimination in all forms continues to persist. It emphasizes that to discriminate is a direct violation of the Charter of the United Nations:

“Discrimination between human beings on the ground of race, colour, or ethnic origin is an offence to human dignity and shall be condemned as a denial of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, as a violation of the human rights and fundamental freedoms proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as an obstacle to friendly and peaceful relations among nations and as a fact capable of disturbing peace and security among nations.”(Article 1)²

International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

In 1965, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)³. Put into effect in 1969, this convention is legally binding and commits its signatories to the elimination of racial discrimination and the promotion of understanding among all races. Further, States are required to outlaw hate speech and criminalize involvement in racist organizations. In terms of the countries referenced in this report, they have all signed the ICERD between 1966 and 1969.

¹ United Nations Document – United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (A/RES/18/1904)

² United Nations Document – United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (A/RES/18/1904)

³ International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, New York, 7 March 1966



UN Photo/Teddy Chen – *On 3 November 1970 the Third Committee of the General Assembly met to discuss draft resolutions on the elimination of racial discrimination.*

Essentially, with 25 Articles, this document established that racial discrimination and racial superiority are direct threats to the principles of human dignity and equality and thus, must be condemned in all its forms.

In Article 1, it starts off with the definition according to this Convention of the term “racial discrimination” to which it states: “any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, or any other field of public life.”⁴

ICERD urges all signatories to condemn racial discrimination by repealing all laws and practices that propagate racism and proclaiming all offenses of racial discrimination to be held accountable. Essentially, all measures need to be urgently adopted to ensure that racial discrimination is eradicated. Furthermore, a Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination was established through Article 8 allowing a group of independent experts to ensure that States implement ICERD properly and effectively.

⁴ International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, New York, 7 March 1966

Moreover, the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA), adopted by the United Nations in 2001, not only calls for the universal ratification of the ICERD, but provides recommendations and practical measures for the international community to tackle racial discrimination as a global concern.

Country Examples

Australia

From 1901-1975, Australia restricted any non-European immigration into the country under the White Australia Policy. Although this policy was eradicated in 1975, it contributed to the development of a racially white society. With rapid globalization today, all States need to learn how to embrace multiculturalism and teach about their country's histories accurately. Policies enacted after 1975 in Australia in regard to multiculturalism allowed immigration to increase slowly over the past decades. In addition, many laws were enacted to help eradicate discrimination such as the Racial Discrimination Act of 1975, the Commonwealth Racial Hatred Act of 1995, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act of 1986, and many more.

The One Nation Party, a political party founded in 1997 in Australia, is openly anti-immigration, anti-multiculturalism, anti-Chinese, and anti-Islam. Although such parties receive media attention, they lack in receiving electoral support and success stories within the political realm itself. Nonetheless, they are a concern and the government of Australia must continue striving to hold accountable all politicians and citizens who propagate hate speech.

After the September 11 attacks by the Al-Qaeda terrorist organization against the United States in 2001, Muslims became increasingly discriminated against, with people from all around the world acting hostile and prejudicial towards them. This strained relationships in Australia and led to the 2005 Cronulla race riots which consisted of a large gathering of Caucasian Australians targeting attacks toward those who looked of Middle Eastern origin. This occurred because of a rise in ethnic and racial tensions that came to the surface. However, if these ethnic and racial tensions were mitigated to begin with, through implementing anti-discrimination policies, promoting tolerance and multiculturalism through education, and holding all hate crimes accountable, events such as the 2005 Cronulla race riots could be prevented.



AP/Rob Griffith – *Racial tension during 2005 Cronulla race riots in Australia.*

This is why it is important for countries to uphold the declarations and conventions of the United Nations because they provide recommendations and solutions to alleviate tensions and help foster welcoming and inclusive communities where the respect and dignity of all human beings is upheld.

However, despite anti-discrimination and anti-racist legislation, some political parties in Australia continue to feed off of people's hatred and fear of multiculturalism, backing their claims with myths that migrants steal jobs and erase national culture. The media in Australia also needs to be held accountable for contributing to the marginalization of the Muslim community. In many cases, Muslims are only shown on the news when they are involved in something illegal. Politicians then capitalize off these reported incidents by building off these negative stereotypes. In 2019, ten parties in Australia's federal election were listed as openly Islamophobic in order to better identify with public sentiment.

This is problematic as it encourages openly racist statements and attacks against Muslims to become regularized and normalized. In some cases, in regard to politics, it has even been misrepresented as respectable.

In recent years, many acts of discrimination have been committed in Australia against Muslims. Using hate speech as acceptable rhetoric is extremely common in far-right nationalist organizations. Ideological scapegoating of Muslims has become normalized and even,

institutionalized in both public and private spheres. With each discriminatory remark made by a politician or portrayed by the media, fear increases within the Muslim community of Australia. The far-right is spreading and becoming more powerful in terms of its reach and influence which diminishes multiculturalism and depletes social inclusion.

Although Australia has new legislation and grassroots organizations which have launched very successful anti-discrimination campaigns, as long as far right extreme nationalist parties continue to project racist rhetoric, Australia must continue its efforts to combat discrimination.

Hungary

In 2015, a refugee crisis, also known as the European migrant crisis, began in which refugees coming from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan entered the European Union. In regard to this, Hungary's Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán, said to German newspaper *Bild*, "We don't see these people as Muslim *refugees*. We see them as Muslim *invaders*." In 2018, Hungary refused to take part in the EU's resettlement programme. As a result, in March of 2020, the European Court of Justice ruled that Hungary, Poland, and Czech Republic violated their obligation to take in their fair share of asylum seekers during the refugee crisis.⁵ The European Union had agreed to distribute 160,000 asylum seekers who were located in Greece and Italy into other European countries. As a result, far right politicians used this moment as an opportunity to project anti-immigration standpoints and gain conservative followers who did not want immigrants to be let in. Consequently, many European countries experienced an emergence of conservative politics, including Hungary.

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán went so far as to say he would get around the European Union's program to keep Europe "Christian", as many of the refugees were coming from Africa and the Middle East. Stating that "[m]ulticulturalism is only an illusion," Orbán doesn't believe Christian and Muslim communities will ever get along.⁶ This is a clear example of discriminating on the basis of religion. Not only is this against the Hungarian Constitution, but it is in violation of

⁵ Stevis-gridneff, M., & Pronczuk, M. (2020, April 02). E.U. Court Rules 3 Countries Violated Deal on Refugee Quotas. Retrieved August 08, 2020, from <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/02/world/europe/european-court-refugees-hungary-poland-czech-republic.html>

⁶ Agerholm, Harriet (2018, January 09). Refugees are 'Muslim invaders', says Hungarian PM Viktor Orban. Retrieved August 08, 2020, from <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/refugees-muslim-invaders-hungary-viktor-orban-racism-islamophobia-eu-a8149251.html>

fundamental principles and values embedded in the institutional framework of the European Union and the United Nations, both of which Hungary is a part of.



AFP/Attila Kisbenedek – *Prime Minister Viktor Orbán*

Another example of racism in Hungary is that the town of Gyöngyöspata ethnically segregated Roma children in the local primary school. Many supporters of the Hungarian government were quick to defend racially segregated education, despite it being blatantly discriminatory. A recent court case in May of 2020 awarded compensation to Roma families throughout Gyöngyöspata; however, the government has tried to stop this payment from taking place. This is illegal under both Hungarian and European Union law.

Furthermore, in May 2020, when quarantine was officially mandated and social distancing became required, a stabbing took place in Budapest, killing two. One of the victims killed happened to be a far-right supporter. Social media was quick to spread false news that the perpetrators were “gypsies”. This shows how minorities are used as scapegoats and when they are blamed, it provides a reason for hatred to conspire against them. Despite social distancing regulations, “Our Homeland Movement”, a far-right party, gathered for a rally against “gypsy crime”. Police initially banned the event; however, besides trying to take signs away from participants at the beginning, they let the rally take place and stood by. Later in the evening, violent hate crimes were committed against Roma people throughout the city. Activists were not able to disrupt the event due to coronavirus concerns.

This is yet another example of how the far-right takes advantage of any situation, even the coronavirus, and is becoming increasingly powerful by rebelling against norms and denying facts. A similar event occurred in the United States where authorities allowed far-right militias to protest the mandated quarantine with assault rifles, simply standing by and watching. However, when protests occurred after the death of George Floyd, a man of African descent who was wrongfully killed by the police, the President of the United States called for lethal force to be used in order to suppress the uprising. Like Hungary, far-right parties are currently on the side of the government, due to their similar conservative mindset, which provides evidence that racism and the far-right can only thrive if infrastructures are already in place to support them. It also shows that if the government is complicit of the far-right and no one is held accountable, violent consequences will be the result.

Germany

Throughout the 1990s, Germany saw a wave of neo-Nazism. In recent years, Germany has seen another intense rise of racist and neo-Nazi behavior. Some demonstrations are even taking place in former concentration camps by challenging the tour guides with holocaust denial, taking selfies in front of crematories, and displaying the Hitler salute. In 2019 alone, the government banned three different far-right groups who brand themselves as followers of Adolf Hitler, plan and carry out attacks to murder government officials and those of Jewish descent, and distribute racist and anti-Semitic writing.

With racial discrimination increasing significantly in Germany, the state of Berlin passed the first anti-discrimination law in June 2020. This allows citizens to file complaints and claim damages and compensation if they feel they have been discriminated against by public authorities. This is a step in the right direction to addressing systemic racism, but simultaneously signals that Germany as a whole has a long way to go.

In addition to Germany's Constitution which states that discrimination is prohibited, Germany passed a federal law in 2006 called the General Equal Treatment Act (AGG) which covers discrimination in employment and between private citizens, but this law does not apply to areas

governed by public law. This new law introduced by Berlin will help close the gaps in protecting citizens from discrimination by police and in the education sector.

Furthermore, there is currently a movement gaining traction in Germany known as Reichsbürger (Citizens of the Reich). Those affiliated with the movement do not recognize the post-war German Republic and believe in the continuance of the Reich. They are known for spreading racist threats and propaganda. Groups that have formed around this movement, such as the “United German Peoples and Tribes,” are becoming banned and the German government is instilling extra systematic surveillance on these types of groups.

The far-right is extremely powerful and the German government must be proactive in remaining two steps ahead in order to stop these movements and groups from contributing to the rise of discrimination. Berlin’s new state law was the first of many steps and Germany must continue to criminalize groups who preach racial superiority and hold all citizens accountable for hate speech and discriminatory actions.



Getty Images/Sascha Schuermann – Neo-Nazi’s protest refugees entering Germany

Italy

In 2019, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) released a report titled, “Report of mission to Italy on racial discrimination, with a focus on incitement to racial hatred and discrimination”. Within this report, the OHCHR team stated that they have received many complaints and incidents in regards to an increase in racism, racial discrimination, and xenophobia against migrants, immigrants, and minorities such as Roma and blacks in Italy. Overall, there has been a huge spur of racial hatred and discrimination, especially in terms of hate speech. The report also highlights that government officials must be held accountable as their platforms spread hate speech at a national level. Many politicians have been blamed for inciting racial hatred through building off preconceived fears of security, the economy, and loss of national identity.

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination has recommended that Italy work harder to hold accountable *anyone*, including government officials, for spreading ideas based on racial superiority or hatred. Political manipulation allows citizens to think politicians are defending their national identity and protecting their security, making racial discrimination a socially acceptable practice.

In June 2020, half of the Italian members of the European Parliament voted against a resolution to condemn all forms of racism, hate and violence. This culture of racism that is becoming acceptable on a wide scale consequently results in more racially charged attacks committed against minorities. The normalization of hate speech and structural racism is deeply rooted and Italy needs to urgently hold accountable perpetrators of hate speech.

Furthermore, in 2018, Matteo Salvini, Deputy Prime Minister of Italy at the time, refused rescue teams to help migrants crossing the Mediterranean. The United Nations called out the Italian government for refusing rescue ships entry to Italy and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, announced she would send investigators to Italy to check the reports of racism and violence against migrants. Salvini threatened to cut funding to the United Nations, even though a country visit is a recognized and established procedure within the United Nations.

Iraq

Discrimination runs rampant in Iraq and is systemic and institutionalized through the sectarian system of government that is currently in place. Minority groups are discriminated on the basis of their ethnicity and their religious beliefs. The systemic corruption in the Iraqi government fuels the discrimination and unfair practices, as elites seek to retain power and influence by suppressing others. This includes discrimination in all areas including government jobs, services, protection, and more.

The Government of Iraq has a historical trend of overlooking racial discrimination. One of the main problems is that the government is not addressing the problem at its roots, despite claims that they are. All government practices confirm that racial discrimination is a fundamental part of the mentality of those in power. Consequently, violence has been the result. The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, also known as Daesh, are militant groups that follow a fundamentalist form of Sunni Islam. The government, in turn, has destroyed many cities and killed many people where Sunni Arabs are the ethnic majority. The government failed each time to prevent Daesh members from taking over the city. Instead, the government would enter a city in the aftermath and leave cities completely destroyed and dilapidated, under the pretense of expelling Daesh. Millions have been displaced because of the government's failed protection and lack of security.

In addition, it is known that government and militia forces abduct, threaten, and kill Sunni Arabs. The Sunni Arabs live in fear and the United Nations must remind Iraq of the principles that bind them. The United Nations must hold Iraq accountable as the available data confirms that Iraq persistently violates its legal obligations in several ways, including by engaging directly in racial discrimination, supporting racial discrimination by third parties, and failing to use "all appropriate means" to end racial discrimination.

Further concerns about racial discrimination in Iraq include many different realms. Firstly, there are allegations of human rights violations by Iraqi forces and affiliated militias including summary executions, enforced disappearances, torture, destruction of homes and other properties, and targeting of ethnic groups. Secondly, there is limited representation of ethnic minorities in public office including the quota system established by the Electoral Act. Some internally displaced persons, including Arabs, are prevented entry to the Kurdistan Region on the basis of ethnicity.

Furthermore, a lack of data regarding complaints of discrimination highlights poor legislation implementation, an absence of trust in the judicial system, and more.

On 1 October 2019, protests began in Iraq calling for the dismantling of the sectarian system of government and demanding accountability for the corruption that has crippled Iraq's economy, elevating the interests of elites at the expense of the Iraqi people. These peaceful protests have been met with violence, including assassinations and enforced disappearances.

If perpetrators are held accountable, it would result in less racial discrimination, reduced impunity, and real justice for victims of discrimination.⁷ The government of Iraq consistently fails to show progress and results. Iraq is not meeting its obligations under ICERD in areas where it is, in fact, unable to exercise effective control over its territory. However, the government's habit of blaming other groups for violations of ICERD is a pretext that has been used for the last fifteen years as an excuse to avoid meeting their obligations.

In order to put an end to the suffering of the Iraqi people and end impunity by bringing perpetrators to justice, the UN Conventions must be upheld and enforced. Further, the international community must step in and Iraq must agree to and cooperate with UN mandated independent investigations.

Kingdom of the Netherlands

Mr. Geert Wilders is a member of the House of Representatives of the Netherlands, and founded the Party for Freedom in 2006, remaining the leader of the party today. He is known for his extreme right-wing politics and his strong anti-Muslim beliefs. Before the Netherlands general election of 2017, Wilders said, "Islam is the biggest problem in the Netherlands".⁸ Mr. Wilders went on to share publically many other anti-Muslim sentiments that encouraged more to identify with the extreme right. He constantly addresses negative implications of Islamization in terms of both economic and cultural effects. Despite being against mass immigration in general, Mr. Wilders

⁷ Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ), "Shadow Report on Iraq submitted by Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ) to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination". 26 November – 14 December 2018. <https://www.gicj.org/images/2019/pdfs/GICJ-Report-to-CERD-97---IRAQ-rev.pdf>

⁸ Geert Wilders, "Inbreng Wilders bij debat Algemene Politieke Beschouwingen," *PVV.nl*, September 19, 2007, <https://www.pvv.nl/12-in-de-kamer/spreekteksten/475-inbreng-wilders-bij-debat-algemene-politieke-beschouwingen.html>.

draws specifically on the fact that every sector in the Netherlands is becoming Islamized, and highlights the matter as urgent claiming “we are losing our country” multiple times. Pronouncing that he believes the Netherlands is changing for the worse ties in with the fear that many Westernized countries have—they want minorities to stay minorities. Mr. Wilders even went so far as to say: “Stop the Islamization of the Netherlands and the West!”⁹ Constantly reiterating that ethnic Dutch must act now and quickly to do something to stop the takeover of Islam, each of his statements incites hatred towards and terror within the Muslim community. Mr. Wilders simultaneously depicts Islamic culture as sexist, homophobic, and inferior, while portraying the Dutch national identity as superior.

The previous UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein, spoke on the matter of Mr. Geert Wilders during a speech he delivered at the Peace, Justice and Security Foundation gala at The Hague on 5 September 2016.¹⁰ Throughout his powerful speech, Mr. Al Hussein called out world leaders and highlighted the fact that they are staying silent amidst many atrocities and human rights violations. He also warns against populists and demagogues in Europe and the United States, which is still on the rise today and is arguably becoming stronger. Essentially, he addressed very important elements on how to tackle these issues and the impact of these issues on the enjoyment of human rights. Proclaiming he is angry “[b]ecause of Mr. Wilder’s lies and half-truths, manipulations and peddling of fear”, Mr. Al Hussein lays out the populist formula clearly: “...make people, already nervous, feel terrible, and then emphasize it’s all because of a group, lying within, foreign and menacing. Then make your target audience feel good by offering up what is a fantasy to them, but a horrendous injustice to others. Inflammate and quench, repeat many times over, until anxiety has been hardened into hatred.”¹¹ This anxiety that is turned into hatred then has the ability to descend into violence.

However, besides comments made by politicians such as Mr. Wilders, Mr. Al Hussein paves the way to an important observation—that these racist comments have a ripple effect and give way to

⁹ Geertwilderspvv, Twitter post, August 29, 2017, 9:04p.m., <https://twitter.com/geertwilderspvv/status/902381341001560064>.

¹⁰ Al Hussein, Z. R. (2016, September 5). Zeid warns against populists and demagogues in Europe and U.S. Retrieved September 07, 2020, from <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=20452>

¹¹ Al Hussein, Z. R. (2016, September 5). Zeid warns against populists and demagogues in Europe and U.S. Retrieved September 07, 2020, from <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=20452>

more people committing discriminatory acts. The Netherlands 3rd Universal Periodic Review in 2017 shows there is a growing number of instances of xenophobia, especially Islamophobia, in the country.¹² In addition, many NGOs reported hundreds of hate incidents directed towards Muslims and Jews. ICERD is clearly not being upheld and needs to be implemented properly. Furthermore, within the 3rd Universal Periodic Review report, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination emphasized concern about the increase in discrimination against members of both the Jewish and Muslim communities, as well as towards those of African descent, showing again that this problem needs to be addressed with urgency.

Most notably, the pervasiveness of racist hate speech in society, especially within social media, exists clearly in the Netherlands. It is promoted by politicians as they publically target immigrants, refugees, and Muslims. Although Mr. Wilders is far from the only politician who engages in discriminatory rhetoric, he has slowly politicized Islam, turning it into an economic issue that a wider range of people can in turn identify with. However, these political and economic attacks on Islam soon became attacks on Islam itself which shows how easy it is to spread hate and discrimination if you use the correct formula.

It is important to note here that along with the rise of populism, comes the normalization of populism. The foul rhetoric portrayed by populist politicians no longer comes as a shock to anyone as people have grown accustomed to it. The United Nations must emphasize that hate speech and discrimination cannot become normalized, as this is detrimental to those being targeted.

The Netherlands is a country historically known for its cultural openness, religious tolerance, and being secularized. Even though the rise of the radical right has changed everything, the Netherlands will unite as one and practice what they preach as a nation. In this regard, the Netherlands presented a new National Action Programme to combat discrimination in all forms in January 2016 to hopefully combat and curtail the rise of discrimination the country is experiencing.

¹² United Nations Document - Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/HRC/WG.6/27/NLD/2)

The United States of America

In the United States, xenophobia, racial discrimination, and anti-immigration is rising. Politicians, such as the current President of the United States, Donald Trump, condone and engage in discriminatory rhetoric through speeches, social media posts, and more, that affect minorities throughout the entire country.



Getty/Joe Raedle – President Trump during a rally in 2019 in Texas vowing to build a wall between Mexico and the United States of America.

President Trump is known for his discriminatory rhetoric and populist ideology. His presidential campaign in 2016 was fueled by nativist sentiment directed at nonwhite immigrants, and he even proposed barring Muslims from entering the country; however, in practice, the resolutions passed on immigration were watered-down from his original proposal.

During his 2016 political campaign, President Trump instilled discrimination through statements such as calling all Mexican immigrants’ “rapists” who bring crime and drugs to the United States. He also advocated for building a wall on the southern border of the country to keep Mexican immigrants out of the United States. Further, President Trump’s discriminatory rhetoric of referring to the coronavirus as the “China virus” provokes a stigma around Asian Americans and has led to a rise in hateful incidents towards this community. This, along with other recorded statements of Mr. Trump commenting negatively on Mexicans, Native Americans, Muslims, Jews,

women, immigrants, and the disabled community, contribute towards promoting a culture of fear and discrimination.

One of the biggest issues on the topic of discrimination in the United States is in regard to racial discrimination. The United States has a larger issue dealing with systemic racial discrimination that, throughout history, has become embedded into all institutions. In May 2020, the death of George Floyd showed the international community and United States citizens that racial profiling and racial discrimination is far from over. According to a poll by the NAACP and the African American Research Collaborative and the Equity Research and Innovation Center, results showed that “75% of African Americans think that Donald Trump is the single most dangerous threat to African American people”.¹³ Results were attributed to President Trump’s failure to protect the country from Covid-19 and his disregard for its disproportionate effect on black people, a population that has been hit the hardest during the pandemic due to health disparities in black communities.

Furthermore, President Trump responded to the death of George Floyd and the consequent protests, by calling for a militarized response. This “militarized response” was looked down upon, and with more black deaths taken at the hands of white police officers occurring in the aftermath of George Floyd—as if his death had no effect on the government—a movement to defund the police has gained traction.

Essentially, whenever a politician says a discriminatory remark or an event fueled by racial hatred occurs, counter-movements occur in the United States. For example, the Black Lives Matter movement gained traction, as well as international attention, as people advocated for all races to be treated equally. Similarly, when President Trump, various politicians, and well-known celebrities were exposed for sexual violence and sexual harassment, the #MeToo movement was the response. The #MeToo movement consisted of survivors of sexual harassment and sexual violence sharing stories with the public in order to raise awareness and advocate for the end of this type of behavior.

¹³ NAACP. “New Poll Reveals COVID-19’s Impacts on African American Communities,” May 21, 2020. <https://www.naacp.org/latest/new-poll-reveals-covid-19s-impacts-african-american-communities/>.

The citizens of the United States are ready to combat racism and discrimination with protests and movements, and they are not afraid to stand up for what is right. Especially now that more agree that the United States has deep-rooted systemic discrimination, an anti-racist revolution calling for racial justice is occurring. As the previous UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Al Hussein, said in his 2016 speech, President Trump is one of the demagogic figures that we, as an international community, needs to watch and speak up about.

Norway

White nationalism all around the world is increasing and becoming more concerning as violent events follow. Norway is known for its egalitarian society; however, after George Floyd's death in the United States, Norway was one of the many countries where protests erupted. These demonstrations against discrimination sparked acknowledgment that racial discrimination is a problem in Norway as well.

On 22 July 2011, two domestic terrorist attacks, both by Anders Behring Breivik, occurred, killing 77 people. Anders is an ultra-right-wing extremist who believes in white supremacy. He bombed government headquarters before massacring members at a youth Labour Party summer camp and used the reasoning that the Labour Party had let in too many immigrants. In his manifesto titled "2083 - A European Declaration of Independence", he explains that he is doing this as a favor to the white race.



Getty Images - *Anders Behring Breivik makes Nazi salute during court appearance.*

On 10 August 2019, Philip Manshaus, a white supremacist, murdered his Chinese-born adopted sister before attempting to massacre Muslims at the local mosque. He was indicted for terrorism and murder, and sentenced to Norway's maximum jail term. Philip claims to have defended himself and carried out these deadly attacks in order to save the white race.

Besides these terrorist attacks, ethnic profiling is known to be a concern in Norway where many face trouble when applying for jobs and renting apartments, despite high education and fit qualifications, but because of their skin color. Norway needs to instill more policies to eradicate discrimination in all its forms. According to a report by the Norwegian newspaper, *Aftenposten*, four out of five Norwegians believe discrimination exists in Norway. Racism in 2020 is being directly confronted, with today's generation refusing to back down and standing firmly for the complete eradication of hate and discrimination.

Furthermore, the Progress Party practices anti-immigrant rhetoric and draws on Norwegian's historic racism to try and prove that immigration is not good for Norway. The Progress Party also preaches claims that immigrants are taking away from ethnic Norwegian's jobs, despite the absence of evidence to back up their claim. Racial discrimination again boils down to the powerful influence of politicians and their ability to manipulate populations into believing their sentiments, whether backed up by evidence or not. Essentially, conservatives in Norway have been using the same excuse, blaming immigrants for undermining the well-being of ethnic Norwegians.

However, despite the two white extremist attacks by Philip Manshaus and Anders Behring Breivik, ethnic profiling, and racial discrimination that is present in Norway, many top politicians continue to deny the existence of racism in Norway. There are, in fact, statistics showing a slow increase over the years for opportunities in the fields of economics, politics, and more for minorities. Even though ethnic profiling and racial discrimination continue to be a concern, government statistics show that progress is being made. However, as long as discrimination in some form still exists, the fight against it must persist, especially with the extreme right present and ready to steer the population into fear.

Denmark and Sweden

The Danish political party, Stram Kurs, also known as Hard Line, was founded in 2017 by Rasmus Paludan, who remains the party leader today. The party is known for its openly anti-Islam and anti-immigration stance and is referred to as the Hard Line because of its strict, “hardline” views, on ethnicity, immigration and citizenship. The party’s platform runs on banning Islam and deporting all of Denmark's Muslims. Party leader Rasmus Paludan, a former lawyer, was convicted and found guilty for making racist statements in 2019. According to local Danish news reports, Paludan was convicted again in June 2020 and charged for not only making racist statements, but for another incident in which he mowed down a man using a vehicle. The court banned him from working as a lawyer for three years and from using his driving license for one year. However, despite being convicted, Paludan remains quite popular with his extremist platform on Islam and non-western immigration. Like many populists around the world, Paludan gains traction through social media, specifically YouTube, which helps him spread his racist views with the click of a button and thus, gain a large following quickly.

In Malmo, Sweden, on 28 August 2020, a public burning of the Quran during an anti-Muslim rally was performed by members of the Danish far-right party, Stram Kurs. Rasmus Paludan did not attend as Sweden banned him from the country for 2 years under the assumption he could pose a threat to society. However, the members of the party carried out the rally without him, set fire to the Quran, and said many anti-Islam statements. Three people were arrested for inciting racial hatred. This public burning of the Quran received country-wide attention quickly and a protest against anti-Islam activities erupted later that day involving a few hundred people.



AFP/TT News Agency – *Smoke from protest in Malmo, Sweden.*

The protest we saw in Sweden on 28 August 2020 does not stand alone. In the past, the country has witnessed eruptions of unrest that have been linked to issues concerning unemployment and integration of immigrants. Other events involving the Quran and anti-Islam sentiments have also occurred in the past. In December of 2015, a Danish man uploaded a video to his Facebook group, “YES TO FREEDOM – NO TO ISLAM” of himself setting fire to the Quran, the central religious text of Islam. Under Denmark’s penal code, clause 140, anyone can be imprisoned or fined for publicly insulting or degrading religious doctrines or worship. Thus, he was charged with blasphemy. Although the government was proactive in executing this decision, it is clear that Denmark needs to monitor online hate speech to a greater extent.

Circling back to the bigger picture, Sweden and Denmark over the years have stood out for being some of the few politically stable countries in the region. However, now, over the past few years, particularly since the migration crisis in Europe that started in 2015, issues such as immigration, race, integration, crime, religion, social welfare and discrimination have been at the forefront of political discussions in these countries.

It is also important to note here that the Scandinavian countries, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, all have an economic model of universal services which suggest opportunity for everyone. This model helps prove that immigrants are not a threat to the well-being of these countries.

Paradoxically, these countries would perform better economically with a greater influx of immigrants despite what extreme right politicians proclaim.

Conclusion

Large Scale Problem

The entire world—including every society and community—experiences discrimination in some form. This rise of discrimination globally extends beyond the countries listed in this report. For instance, France’s Marine Le Pen, President of the National Front, publicly denounces gay marriage and the possibility of adoption for homosexual couples. Israel is another example in which many inciting posts are published on social media by political leaders and state officials, all targeting Palestinians. A trend that presents itself on behalf of all these countries is that populist politicians understand how to normalize hate and discrimination and thus, capitalize off this ability.

GICJ Position

Geneva International Centre for Justice calls on all signatories to uphold the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. States need to hold accountable perpetrates discrimination, incites hate or instills terror. Government officials and politicians, in particular, have an enormous platform and influence over citizens. Thus, it is extremely important for governments to implement stricter laws and regulations so everyone can be held accountable. We call on all States to criminalize groups and organizations which spread and promote racial superiority as well as intolerance. Further, in order to respect every human being’s dignity, citizens must not only be held accountable for hate speech and discriminatory actions, but reparations must be given to the victims involved. Together, as an international community, we must continue to strive to promote multiculturalism by battling the rise of discrimination around the world.

Despite world progress in multiculturalism and globalization, discrimination in all forms continues to persist. Countries must, therefore, uphold the articles enshrined in the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, implement the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, and work continuously to combat all forms of racial discrimination.

Concluding Remarks

Unfortunately, the examples included in this report only scratch the surface of discriminatory and racist behavior that is on the rise across the globe. Today, we are seeing a heightened political consciousness in many nations, with many being convinced that their national identities are threatened by immigration and cultural change. This allows the far right to capitalize on fears of minorities and gain attention within the media and politics. The simultaneous increase in nationalism and globalization contradict itself when multiculturalism is not upheld. Racism has become a disease our world has failed to eradicate and until these countries uphold their duty to fight against racial discrimination in all its forms, racism will continue to thrive. Politicians too often foster a xenophobic climate by blaming immigrants for increasing crime rates and identity loss, even though evidence shows there is no correlation. Racist discourse in politics is feeding into the public's fear of migrants and the rejection of minorities within their society. All countries referenced in this report must uphold the articles expressed in the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and work continuously to combat all forms of racial discrimination.

Recommendations

We call on the UN Human Rights Council to:

- Urge all UN Member States to condemn racial discrimination by repealing all laws and practices that propagate racism and proclaiming all perpetrators of racial discrimination to be held accountable.
- Urge UN Member States to continue to criminalize groups who preach racial superiority and hold all citizens accountable for hate speech and discriminatory practices.
- Provide tangible steps on how States can hold hate speech to account when advocated by politicians and government officials.
- Continue to call out and condemn racism in all its forms as racial discrimination and racial superiority are direct threats to the principles of human dignity and equality.
- Encourage the international community to speak up against racism and act against hate speech and discrimination in order to uphold human rights equally for all individuals.
- Emphasize the importance for all UN Member States to implement the DDPA and promote the commemoration of its 20th anniversary in 2021.

Geneva International Centre *for* Justice (GICJ)

Independent, non-profit, International non-governmental organization

GICJ is an independent, non-profit, international non-governmental organization dedicated to the promotion and reinforcement of commitments to the principles and norms of human rights. GICJ is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland and is governed by the Swiss Civil Code and its statutes. Basing its work on the rules and principles of International Law, International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law, GICJ observes and documents human rights violations and seeks justice for their victims through all legal means available.

Mission: GICJ's mission is to improve lives by tackling violations and all forms of violence and degrading or inhumane treatment through the strengthening of respect for human rights; reinforcing the independence of lawyers and judiciaries; consolidating the principles of equity and non-discrimination; ensuring rule of law is upheld; promoting a culture of awareness on human rights; and combating impunity.

Work: GICJ has been tackling issues of justice and accountability since it was established. GICJ maintains a partnership with various NGOs, lawyers and a vast civil society network around the world. Through these channels, GICJ is able to receive documentation and evidence of human rights violations and abuses as they occur in several countries. GICJ continues to bring this information to the attention of relevant UN bodies in order to gain justice for all victims

