

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL - 50th SESSION

Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance

05 July 2022

Ms. E. Tendayi Achiume, Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance addressed the Council on the systemic racial discrimination observed since 2020. She affirmed that almost two years later, the backlash against racial justice and racial justice advocates globally remains a matter of urgent concern, placing indigenous human rights defenders, and human rights defenders belonging to racially and ethnically marginalized groups in the gravest danger from State and non-state actors. The **Covid-19 pandemic and the vaccine apartheid** have vividly displayed and exacerbated the persistence of racial and ethnic hierarchies in all aspects of life. The SR, on this occasion, presented to the Council two reports that call for attention to racial injustice: the report on *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sustainable Development Goals and the fight against racial discrimination (A/HRC/50/60)*, and on *combating the glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and related ideologies (A/HRC/5/61)*.

The first report analyses the **2030 Agenda through the lenses of racial justice and racial equality**. The 2030 Agenda is contextualized within the broader international development framework, which has historical origins in the colonial exploitation of racially marginalized people. She also analyses racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance as they manifest both through discrimination against individuals and groups on the basis of race, colour, descent and national or ethnic origin, as well as through disparate treatment of and outcomes for countries and territories subject to prolonged exploitation during the colonial era, on the basis of racist theories and beliefs. She concludes with findings and limitations. These include a **failure** of the 2030 Agenda to provide racial justice and equality and to address systemic racism and xenophobia. The persistent **lack of resources**, failure to collect **disaggregated data** and dearth of **political will** still **limit progress** toward racial justice in virtually all national and international contexts. The second report notes the continued prominence of **racist, nationalist and far-right political parties and organizations** operating throughout various national contexts. These organizations typically use **digital technologies** such as social media to **spread racist ideologies** and promote exclusionary political platforms. She warned the Council that the international community is currently experiencing a startling racial justice backlash promoted both by private political actors and State actors. In conclusion she expresses alarm and concern about the **territorial aggression in Ukraine** justified on the purported basis of eliminating neo-Nazism. This is an instrumentalization of the serious human rights concerns raised by neo-Nazi mobilizations where they exist. The use of **neo-Nazism as a pretext** to justify territorial aggression seriously undermines genuine attempts to combat neo-Nazism and related manifestations of racist, nationalist and militarist ideologies.

In her conclusive remarks, the SR considers the **gender perspective** an essential aspect of implementing the 2030 Agenda. The human rights analysis does not dwell on the intersectional analysis in the context of gender and the approach of UN agencies and States, because there has been striking progress in the approach of governments and multilateral organizations. Moreover, the SR affirmed that the report aims to highlight avenues of **urgent intervention** to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. This includes maximising the emancipatory potentials of what could be done now, such as the collection of **disaggregated data** and diagnosing

inequality on racial and ethnic lines. It is critical for States to confront what the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda could not do. They should engage with the **fundamental limitations** due to injustices embedded in the global development framework. **Anti-Semitism** requires a strong human rights response and a principled approach, which helps to fight against institutional approaches. Disaggregated data is essential for diagnosing the extent of the marginalisation of groups. These approaches were embedded in the SDGs but not in all indicators. The SR further said that an effective starting point to combatting systemic racism was finding **common foundations, such as historical legacies**. **Reparations** are an **imperative component** of the fight against systemic racism. It is also crucial to find the points where systemic racism was embedded.

Interactive dialogue

57 country delegations took the floor during the interactive dialogue. **The majority of the countries** welcomed the SR's provoking and thoroughly documented analysis and the comprehensive reports. The notion of equal opportunities is contingent on the absence of any form of discrimination and underpins the realization of the potential and aspirations of each person. The elimination of contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance is at the heart of the **2030 Agenda** for Sustainable Development. This is part of the commitment to leave no one behind. Speakers also affirmed that the use of distorted allegations of neo-Nazism as a pretext to justify territorial aggression was **unacceptable** and seriously undermined genuine attempts to combat neo-Nazism. Indeed, delegations thanked the SR for her report on **combatting the glorification of Nazism** and concurred with her **condemnation of Russia** for using the fight against Neo-Nazism as a **false pretext** to justify the brutal and unjustified **aggression against Ukraine**. Some noted the rise of **Russia-phobia**, cementing conflict in Europe, and developing among groups at State level preaching intolerance and neo-Nazi ideology. Development actors should prioritise the meaningful **participation, representation, and leadership** of racially marginalised peoples, including indigenous peoples, in the **creation of alternative approaches** to development and human well-being. Countries also applauded the launch of the SR's eight-point action plan on **combatting anti-Semitism**, which all nations should recognise and combat.

Norway, reiterating the use of distorted allegations of neo-Nazism as a pretext to justify territorial aggression as unacceptable, highlighted that development actors should prioritize the meaningful participation, representation, and leadership of racially marginalized peoples, including indigenous peoples, in the creation of alternative approaches to development and human well-being. The **State of Palestine** affirmed that the main obstacle to realizing the SDGs for the Palestinian people is the Israeli colonial military occupation that continues to abolish all means of development in Palestine. **Israel**, on the contrary, affirmed that demonizing the country, accusing the people of being Nazis, and of manipulating the media and the world's superpowers to its interests is classic anti-Semitism. The **EU, Israel**, the **UK**, and the **U.S.** noted with alarm that the Russian Federation has sought to justify its military invasion and territorial aggression in Ukraine on the purported basis of eliminating neo-Nazism, seriously undermining genuine attempts to combat neo-Nazism. **Afghanistan** called on the international community to help ensure a peaceful situation, free from ethnic conflict. This was unlike what was happening now under the aegis of the Taliban, which is encouraging and perpetrating ethnic discrimination.

Ukraine condemned the pretext used by Russia for attacking its territory. Agreeing with the SR, it affirmed that attempts to justify unprovoked invasion of a sovereign state on the purported basis of eliminating Nazism is a blatant instrumentalization of serious human rights concerns. This is not

merely another propaganda stunt, but a purposeful attempt to distort what this country itself personifies. **Russia Federation** reiterated the fact that anti-Russian tendencies in Western countries have become systemic and the situation in this regard continues to deteriorate. Racist decisions by some governments regarding the rights of Russian-speaking minorities has destroyed the postulates on the equality of persons belonging to national minorities.

NGOs noted that health inequities and racism are a global phenomenon and a lasting legacy of European colonialism, evidenced by the global disparities in access to Covid-19 and other vaccines. Moreover, women who are marginalized on the grounds of their race, gender, and sexual orientation, are more likely to be discriminated against in terms of their access to reproductive healthcare. NGOs also welcomed the SR's reports and her analysis on the current economic structures that privilege the so-called developed nations being fundamentally incompatible with racial justice; and on efforts to strengthen mechanisms to counter discrimination, intolerance, and racist and xenophobic violence, including antisemitism. However, they affirmed that while the UN, EU, and many countries remain committed to implementing these mechanisms, efforts are insufficient. Many countries and international institutions continue to finance groups that promote blatant antisemitism, hate speech, and violent incitement against Jews. **Law in the Service of Man** considered Israel's institutionalized discrimination against the Palestinian people entailing systemic violation of their right to self-determination and their right to development. The **European Union of Jewish Students** welcomed the Action Plan to Combat Antisemitism. **Justiça Global** reported of violations of the rights of the black and indigenous population in Brazil, including mass incarceration, torture and hunger.

Delegations in exercise of the right of reply were the **Russian Federation** and **Ukraine**.

Delegations that took the floor during the Interactive Dialogue (57 country delegations):

Afghanistan, Algeria, Australia, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan (on behalf of a Group of Countries), Bahrain, Barbados, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil (on Behalf of a Group of Countries), Brazil, Bolivia, Canada, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire (on behalf of Group of African States), Cuba, China (on behalf of a Group of Countries), China, DPRK, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, European Union (on behalf of the EU, Australia, Canada, Iceland, Japan, Liechtenstein, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, the UK and the U.S.), European Union, France, Georgia, Greece, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Iran, Israel, Jordan (on behalf of Group of Arab States, Arab Group), Lesotho, Libya, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Mauritania, Morocco, Namibia, Norway (on behalf of NB8: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden), Pakistan (on behalf of OIC), Peru, Portugal, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, South Africa, State of Palestine, Ukraine, United Kingdom, U.S, Venezuela, Türkiye.

NHRIs and NGOs that took the floor (10):

Action Canada for Population and Development, Al-Haq, Law in the Service of Man, European Union of Jewish Students, Friends World Committee for Consultation, Institute for NGO Research, International Humanist and Ethical Union, International Youth and Student Movement for the United Nations, Justiça Global, Minority Rights Group, Youth Parliament for SDG.

International organizations (1): UNICEF.

To watch full meeting refer to [UN Web TV](#).