



THE GENEVA CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
ADVANCEMENT AND GLOBAL DIALOGUE

International Panel Event

Building Peace Ending Racism

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FOREWORD

The present publication is the result of an online panel debate organized by the Geneva Centre for Human Rights Advancement and Global Dialogue entitled “Building Peace – Ending Racism” on 21 September 2022, the International Day of Peace, reflecting its theme for this year.

The panel, composed of three eminent panellists, respectively from the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, a European and a South African anti-racism network, addressed a host of crucial issues in the complex and challenging domain which was the theme of the panel.

Lasting peace goes hand-in-hand with equality at all levels, built upon a universal recognition of and respect for the inherent dignity of every human being. Racism, related discrimination, injustice and violence sap all efforts striving to build just and peaceful societies. Racism poisons everyday life, contributes to and exacerbates conflict. It further deepens social and economic inequalities, dismantling social security nets. Indeed, ending racism is also a crucial dimension in operationalizing the SDGs.

The Geneva Centre has had the privilege to benefit from the remarkable expertise and extensive field experience of the esteemed panellists, to whom we renew our deep gratitude for their very valuable contributions, and take this opportunity to thank the numerous participants for their high interest.

The present publication contains a summary of the three panel presentations, the Q & A session and the full statements of the panellists. The panel’s reflexions would, I am sure, go a long way towards implementing the rich ideas and recommendations that resulted. Indeed, the fight against racism concerns us all and we need to join our forces to do away with the scourge of racism in our relentless efforts to usher in a truly just and peaceful world.

Dr Umesh Palwankar

***Executive Director
Geneva Centre for Human Rights
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INTRODUCTION

In 2001, the General Assembly voted unanimously that the International Day of Peace, established in 1981 and commemorated on the 21st of September, would be designated as a period of non-violence and cease-fire. All nations and people are invited to honor a cessation of hostilities and to otherwise commemorate the Day through education, public awareness, and strengthening the ideals of peace within and among all nations and peoples.¹ In March 2022, on the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres affirmed that racism continues to poison institutions, social structures and everyday life in all societies. It results in persistent inequality and denial to people of their fundamental human rights. Racism also destabilizes societies, undermines democracies and erodes the legitimacy of governments.²

Today, the most common forms of social inequality are related to gender, class and ethnic background. The concepts of race and racism have a relatively recent origin and historically, their conceptualization has also varied.³ Although there does not exist a universal definition of racism; racism, as a system of social inequality, implies that certain groups do not have equal access to and control over material and immaterial social resources based on their race or ethnicity. It is not only a system of prejudice, but systemic and effecting individuals through societal structures. Contemporary forms of racism are defined as racism without race. Practices or ideas are characterized as racist if they are oriented in intention or effect toward the production, reproduction, or affirmation of unequal relations. Problematization, marginalization and exclusion are important effects of everyday racism.⁴

The **Geneva Centre for Human Rights Advancement and Global Dialogue** believes that it is of paramount importance to place the fight against racism and racial discrimination as a key element in the protection of fundamental human rights. Contemporary forms of prejudice and intolerance, discrimination, and systemic racism are countering endeavors to move towards a more just and peaceful world. Manifestations of systemic, unnoticed, and internalized racism affect the targeted in almost all walks of life, including education, employment, housing, access to justice and health care. During the Covid-19 pandemic, increased hate speech, stigmatization, incitement to discrimination, and xenophobia have led to a rise in violence and discrimination

¹ International Day of Peace. Resolution adopted by the General Assembly ([A/RES/55/282](#)).

² UN (2022) *Secretary-General's Remarks to General Assembly event on the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination*. <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2022-03-18/secretary-generals-remarks-general-assembly-event-the-international-day-for-the-elimination-of-racial-discrimination-bilingual-delivered-follows-scroll-further-down-for>

³ The Atlantic (2020) *The Evolution of Racism*. <http://www.gooriweb.org/news/2000s/2020/sept/atlantic5sept2020.pdf>

⁴ Ineke van der Valk (2001) *Racism, a Threat to Global Peace*. The International Journal of Peace Studies, Volume 6, Number 2. https://www3.gmu.edu/programs/icar/iips/vol8_2/valk.htm

against racial and ethnic minorities.⁵ Hate speech incites violence, undermines diversity and social cohesion, and threatens the common values and principles that bind us together.⁶ Systemic racism is further fueled by disparities in the enforcement of national and international policies and the absence of accountability. Its mechanism builds on an existing and generalized culture of mistrust and impunity.

The **Geneva Centre** believes that local communities are drivers of sustainable peace. Local peacebuilders are leaders in decision-making for peace, security and development, and at the forefront of tackling racism and racial discrimination. Armed conflicts continue to erupt across the globe, causing people fleeing to face race-based discrimination at country borders. Racism continues to be a major obstacle to friendly and peaceful relations among peoples and nations. Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance are often among the root causes of internal and international conflicts, due to the marginalization, discrimination and sometimes even dehumanization that they foster within societies and between population groups. Similarly, the absence of democratic structures, the weakness of the rule of law, and political institutions which are not representative of the entire population, may in the long run contribute to triggering conflicts between societal groups if mistrust and a culture of impunity is allowed to foster. There is thus an immense opportunity for the peacebuilding community to reflect critically on their approaches to armed conflict prevention and humanitarian responses.⁷

The international community has a key role in fostering peace and tackling racism and racial discrimination, and in supporting global movements for equality and human rights. The fight against racism and intolerance demands prompt and sustained action, undertaken with a sense of unflinching purpose. Governments and civil society need to unite their efforts to enforce all rights and duties of people based on their role as rights-holders while preserving ethnic and cultural diversity. Relevant actors should pay attention to early warning signs of racism, hate speech, xenophobia, intolerance, and racial discrimination that may ultimately lead to conflict. They have a crucial role to play in producing transformative changes, prosperity, and enjoyment of human rights. Compassion, inclusiveness, respect and solidarity are the true gateways to just and peaceful societies. Good governance, democracy, respect for the rule of law, and meaningful participation of minorities in political institutions are also essential to prevent and defuse tensions that may lead to situations of conflict. Justice, truth, and reconciliation mechanisms to deal with the legacies of the grave human rights violations committed during conflicts are also crucial.⁸

⁵ European Network Against Racism (2020) *Evidence of the impact of Covid-19 on racialised communities exposes need to address persistent inequalities and racism*. <https://www.enar-eu.org/evidence-of-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-racialised-communities-exposes-need-to/>

⁶ UN (2022) *Secretary General's Message for 2022*. <https://www.un.org/en/observances/countering-hate-speech/messages>

⁷ UN HRC (2012) *United Nations experts say racism is still igniting and fueling violence and conflict*.

⁸ Ibid.

SUMMARY OF THE THREE PANEL PRESENTATIONS

Dr. Umesh Palwankar, Executive Director, Geneva Centre for Human Rights Advancement and Global Dialogue, moderating the panel discussion, gave the floor to **Dr. Verene A. Shepherd, Director, Centre for Reparation Research, University of West Indies; Chair of the United Nations Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD)**.

In her presentation, **Dr. Verene A. Shepherd** wanted to frame the search for peace and anti-racism within the context of the search for reparatory justice. She affirmed that a peaceful world without racism has to confront the issue of equal rights and human rights for those living with the legacies of colonialism. Such legacies include economic exploitation and the failure to recognize the right to development; inequality within and among States; systemic racism, racial discrimination and racial profiling; violations of Indigenous peoples' rights; environmental degradation which has led to climate change; contemporary forms of slavery; damage to cultural heritage and psychological harm because of the ideology of white supremacy – all of which have a negative impact on the effective enjoyment of all human rights and create conflicts in the world. In particular, Africans and people of African descent, Asians and people of Asian descent and Indigenous peoples have been the main victims of colonialism. They continue to be victims of its consequences.

Dr. Verene concluded by stating that ending colonialism and implementing the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, and ending the hierarchizing of racialized groups may support peacebuilding projects. The peace-building process must therefore take on the issue of reparatory justice – calling on former colonial countries to repair, through a development programme and cash injection, the lingering legacies of colonialism, which did so much damage to so many people in the world. The search for decolonial justice in the form of reparation rests on the fact that political decolonization gave ex-colonies freedom of action, but seldom the opportunity to exploit it to full advantage because economic decolonization does not necessarily accompany political decolonization. The achievement of peace and security and development relies on the protection of human rights and the ending of racial discrimination.



Dr. **Verene A. Shepherd** is a Social Historian, and the current Director of the Centre for Reparation Research at the University of the West Indies. She is Chair of the United Nations Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), a post to which she was elected in 2022. She is an honorary fellow of Jesus College, University of Cambridge. Her area of academic specialisation is in African & African-American History, Gender & Migration Studies within the specific fields of slavery and alternatives to the sugar economy in 18th and 19th century Jamaica; Migration and the Asian diaspora in the Caribbean; and Gender discourses in Caribbean history.

She is author, co-author, editor, co-editor and compiler of some important books. Among her awards are the Order of Distinction, Commander Class by the Government of Jamaica for outstanding service to Education, in particular History education and Gender Studies, and The UWI Vice Chancellor's Award for excellence in Public Service.

Dr. Doros Polykarpou, Executive Director, KISA - Action for Equality, Support and Antiracism was the second speaker. He focused on an overview of the situation in Cyprus, in particular the relation between the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish communities. Understanding how strong racism and discrimination impact the country's core society and its future, especially in multicultural and multiethnic communities, is crucial. Racism has a profound impact on the society's ability to seek peaceful cooperation, unification, and cohabitation among everyone on this island.

In addition, he described how the Cyprus Government fails to produce positive results for all facets of society. Political forces gain benefits by playing the racism card, and creating a hostile and negative image of migrants and refugees in the country. A part of this is the criminalization of refugees described as a threat to the identity, demography and security of society. Parallel to this is the ongoing criminalization of those defenders and civil society who work to protect the rights of this group and to criticize the Government for such policies.

He concluded that human rights defenders, civil society and NGOs play an important role. They need a safe and encouraging environment, as well as a powerful and independent monitoring body, a judicial system, a media and journalist independent institute, and political leadership.



Dr. **Doros Polykarpou**, is the co-founder and Executive Director of KISA – Action for Equality, Support, Antiracism. With a Social Science background, he has studied and worked for years in several European countries, especially in the UK and Germany. Due to his long-standing involvement and leading role in civil society organizations he has comprehensive knowledge of the areas of Migration and Asylum, the fight against racism and discrimination, hate speech and hate crimes as well as trafficking in human beings. His areas of expertise include national and European policies in these areas and the impact of the people whose daily lives are affected by them.

Doros worked for several years in the welfare services, especially in the area of the protection of children and women who experienced domestic violence. Currently, alongside his active participation in the work of KISA, he is focusing on developing a sustainable regeneration project in the space in his former bicomunal home community.

The third panellist, **Ms. Rethabile Ratsomo, Anti-Racism Manager, Ahmed Kathrada Foundation, Anti-Racism Network South Africa (ARNSA)** presented the work and key core functions of the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation and the Convenor of the Anti-Racism Network South Africa in building peace and ending racism. These include promotion of the values, rights and principles of the Freedom Charter and the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa; and

organization of projects, programmes, debates and discussions that promote a non-racial and equitable society.

She then focused on the situation in South Africa. Despite developing progressive policies and legislations, the country is currently dealing with a resurgence of racism and racial discrimination which threatens its democracy. South Africa's race relations have always been somewhat of a phenomenon compared to other countries as non-white people continue to be the vast majority. Considering the historical context of apartheid, it is understandable that all other socio-economic rights were tightly linked to race. So now in 2022, the country is faced with high levels of corruption, poor service delivery and inequitable economic conditions which allow racism to destabilise commitments to socio-economic rights and dignity intended to ensure equitable access to democracy and its freedoms. Therefore, it is imperative to continue to be intentional about how we build peace especially through dialogue and education. However, it is necessary for the government to allocate appropriate resources and drive the fight against racism at every possible level. This will enable us to make much needed strides against racism in South Africa.

She concluded with a snippet of Kathrada's speech at Nelson Mandela's funeral that really sums up the commitment to combat racism and the to the realisation of human rights:

"It is up to the present and next generations to take up the cudgels where we have left off. It is up to them, through service to deepen our democracy; entrench and defend our Constitution; eradicate poverty; eliminate inequality; fight corruption, and serve always with compassion, respect, integrity and tolerance. Above all, they must build our nation and break down the barriers that still divide us."



Ms. **Rethabile Ratsomo** is a BA LLB graduate from Rhodes University with a passion for the advancement of all human rights in South Africa. She is currently the Anti-Racism Manager at the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation situated in Johannesburg, South Africa. She is also the Convenor of the Anti-Racism Network South Africa which has a membership of over 80 South African based organizations.

Q & A

Human rights are for everyone everywhere. What happens if human rights violate human life, who is getting involved?

Ms. Rethabile Ratsomo: Who holds people accountable if we all violate international human rights? There is not a quick and easy answer to that. I think, as sovereign nations who believe in the idea of international human rights law and who subscribe to that idea, it is imperative to continue to put pressure on the institutions that deal with it, including the UN and international organizations focusing on human trafficking. Nations need to be able to advocate for people. Pressure allows us to have a more robust legislative framework in place to deal with this issue.

As a person from South Asia, I face this often at western airports so this question comes from a personal level. Should airport security instigate Racial Profiling? And, how can institutions play a role to counter racial profiling in airport security?

Dr. Verene A. Shepherd: One thing has been done is to develop and adopt a General Recommendation on Racial Profiling, among law enforcement officials. Essentially, we are calling on all parties to the CERD to ensure that the General Recommendation can be implemented successfully in order for it to be eliminated. It is rooted in racism and creates a hostile environment, especially for marginalized groups. We have seen the situation in the United States of America in terms of the murder of George Floyd and others. Many of these are due to racial profiling. CERD is actually advocating for ending racial profiling, but it requires efforts from civil society, states parties and institutions. We have to work together, it is a scourge in our landscape.

What would you consider as the significance of data and research to tackle discrimination and inequalities?

Dr. Doros Polycarpou: In order to convince others, we need to cooperate and work together with society and other institutions, based on facts. A data-driven approach is imperative in this regard to challenge prejudice and evaluate plans and actions put in place to improve the social environment. Data is crucial for planning, implementing, evaluating and monitoring the situation as well as our work in this field.

What is in your experience the role of advocacy in promoting human rights in general, and fighting racism, in particular?

Ms. Rethabile Ratsomo: It is a very important way to enforce an anti-racism culture in South Africa. In our specific context, we have seen a lot of racism incidents occur at schools. That is why it is so crucial for us to be able to advocate at the national level for an anti-racism policy that deals directly with this. Human rights advocacy plays an imperative role because it allows people to promote interventions to solve problems. It may not be successful, but it is a very efficient way to understand what the issue is, and how it can be managed.

Annex: Full Statements submitted by the Panellists

Prof Verene A. Shepherd

Director, Centre for Reparation Research, University of West Indies; Chair of the United Nations Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD)

Greetings to everyone on this aspirational International Day of Peace; Yes, says Peter Tosh all those decades ago:

Everyone is crying out for peace
But there will be no peace
'Till men [and women] get
Equal rights and justice

I started with those lines from Peter Tosh, the late Jamaican Reggae artiste and member of the Group the Wailers, which included Bunny Wailer and Bob Marley, because I want to frame the search for peace and anti-racism within the context of the search for reparatory justice; and he best expresses the sentiments I wish to convey.

If we want world peace and an end to racism- which bars the realization of justice for too many, then we have to confront the issue of equal rights and human rights for those living with the legacies of colonialism. Such legacies include economic exploitation and the failure to recognize the right to development; inequality within and among States, systemic racism, racial discrimination and racial profiling; violations of Indigenous Peoples' rights, environmental degradation which has led to climate change; contemporary forms of slavery; damage to cultural heritage and psychological harm because of the ideology of white supremacy – all of which have a negative impact on the effective enjoyment of all human rights and create conflicts in the world. Africans and people of African descent, Asians and people of Asian descent and Indigenous Peoples have been the main victims of colonialism and continue to be victims of its consequences. “Colonialism is History in the West”, said a South African writer, speaking recently to Rachel Chason of the Washington Post “but in our countries, colonialism is now”.

The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, which remains a profound milestone in articulating the harms of colonialism, both historically and in the present, emphasizes the structural forms of racism and racial discrimination that to this day require urgent attention.

In her 2021 report on racial justice and equality (A/HRC/47/53 and A/HRC/47/CRP.1), the then High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michele Bachelet, pointed out the urgency of dismantling systemic racism against Africans and people of African descent and acknowledged that systemic racism is frequently rooted in histories and legacies of enslavement, the transatlantic trade in enslaved Africans and colonialism. Recognizing the imperative for action, in her “Four-point Agenda towards Transformative Change for Racial Justice and Equality” the former High Commissioner highlighted the urgency of confronting past legacies of enslavement, the transatlantic trade in enslaved Africans and colonialism and delivering reparatory justice. The peace-building process must therefore take on the issue of reparatory

justice – calling on former colonial countries to repair, through a development programme and cash injection, the lingering legacies of colonialism, which did so much damage to so many people of the world. The search for decolonial justice in the form of reparation rests on the fact that political decolonization gave ex-colonies freedom of action, but seldom the opportunity to exploit it to full advantage because firstly, economic decolonization does not necessarily accompany political decolonization.

The CARICOM Ten Point Plan for reparatory justices includes calls for an apology for colonial wrongs and continuing colonial legacies, repatriation to Africa of people and cultural heritage, an Indigenous peoples development programme, technology transfer, a demand for debt write off and a return of the current value of the compensation money paid to enslavers at Emancipation.

To conclude, I have always been struck by the fact that Human Rights, one of the three pillars of the United Nations, lags behind the others of peace & security and development in terms of budget. But the fulfilment of peace and security and development relies on the achievement of human rights and the ending of racial discrimination. Truly ending colonialism and implementing the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and ending the hierarchizing of racialized groups will be our ally in this project of peacebuilding; for conflict is not always military; and ceasefire can also be interpreted as ending hostilities through ensuring racial equality. After all, as HIM Haile Selassie 1st said,

“Until the philosophy which holds one race superior and another inferior is finally and permanently discredited and abandoned, everywhere is war. And until there are no longer first-class and second-class citizens of any nation, until the colour of a man’s skin is of no more significance than the colour of his eyes. And until the basic human rights are equally guaranteed to all without regard to race, there is war. And until that day, the dream of lasting peace, world citizenship, rule of international morality, will remain but a fleeting illusion to be pursued, but never attained... now everywhere is war.”

Dr. Doros Polycarpou

Executive Director, KISA - Action for Equality, Support and Antiracism

I will speak about this local specificity in relation to Cyprus and the work of KISA.

Cyprus has always been viewed as a crossroad throughout history. However, one important aspect that the world needs to understand more deeply is the relationship between those who live here and those who arrive here. It was usually a negative experience because the local society viewed these new forces as a threat, as an enemy. This is because they crossed into the island culturally, politically, and strategically. The second aspect to keep in mind is that the island, before 1963, was politically divided. The Constitution, a bi-communal Constitution, instituted a shared power between Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities. During the conflict between the two communities, these frameworks collapsed, and the island has also been geographically divided since 1974.

This is critical because racism plays an important role in the ability of society to seek peaceful cooperation, unification and cohabitation of all the people of this island.

A milestone in this development was the 2004 election. In 2004 the UN and the international community submitted to the two communities a referendum and a plan for the unification of the island. Unfortunately, the Greek Cypriots voted 75-76% against the unification and the Turkish Cypriots voted 65% for the unification.

Three main factors, in my opinion, played a role in this:

- The position of the leaders of each community;
- The benefits of such unification, or the expected benefits; and
- The most significant aspect that influenced the negative votes of the Greek Cypriot and the positive votes of the Turkish Cypriot was the image that they had, and still have, of each other on the island. In contrast to Greek Cypriots, most Turkish Cypriots had a positive opinion of the Greek community.

As a result of this situation, we may be able to understand how racism and discrimination affect the core society of the country and the future of multicultural and multi-ethnic communities.

Migration, refugees and asylum in Cyprus are KIKA's focus.

In 1991, Cyprus adopted the first Migration Model. In 2004, it became a member of the EU and transposed EU Law, the Geneva Conventions and the Refugee Convention into national law. As a result of the discussion about the transposition and implementation of these measures, such aspects also became evident. We have to make sure that we can be part of society but not become an equal part. All asylum and migration policies are built so that people can remain in the countries where they are seen as a labour force. This is rather than seeing them as equal humans with equal rights and abilities.

In a country that adopts a Migration Model, segregating us from others, you have to deal with racism and discrimination, and the non-discrimination principle does not apply to everything. This creates an impression in the feelings and understanding of the people in society, that there are two qualities of people, two kinds of citizens. There is no Action Plan against discrimination.

Based on our current situation in the country [presidential election, presidential system], we can say that the COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to corruption in the country. The Government has failed in all areas to produce positive results for society. This is an important issue where political forces are playing the racism card to gain advantages as well as creating a hostile and negative image of migrants and refugees. They also believe this will compensate for the failure to provide positive results in the critical areas of life.

A part of this is the criminalization of refugees described as a threat to the identity, demography and security of society. Parallel to this is also the ongoing criminalization of those defenders and civil society who work to protect the rights of this group and to criticise the Government for such policies.

In conclusion, human rights defenders, civil society and NGOs play an important role, however, they are not the main actors in developing an open and inclusive society. This is a society free of racism that gives people an opportunity to live equally. They need a safe and encouraging environment, as well as a powerful and independent monitor body, a judicial system, a media and journalist independent institute, and a political leadership.

Ms. Rethabile Ratsomo

Anti-Racism Manager, Ahmed Kathrada Foundation, Anti-Racism Network South Africa (ARNSA)

Good day to everyone and thank you for the opportunity to be here and to add to this conversation today. I am very honoured to be able to share some of the work that we do that we believe helps build peace and end racism.

As mentioned, my name is Rethabile Ratsomo and I am present today as the Anti-Racism Manager at the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation and the Convenor of the Anti-Racism Network South Africa. Although the main reason I have been invited onto this panel is due to my role as the Convenor of the Anti Racism Network South Africa, I would not be able to do justice to its work and history without mentioning the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation's history.

The Ahmed Kathrada Foundation was founded and established in 2008 to continue the legacy of anti-apartheid struggle stalwart Ahmed Kathrada. Ahmed Kathrada was a former Robben Island prisoner who served 26 years in jail alongside his fellow Rivonia Trialists for their stance against the apartheid government. Kathrada's life was characterised by his commitment to the best values and principles of the South African liberation struggle, particularly that of non-racialism and non-sexism. The Foundation's core objective is to deepen non-racialism through its various departments and activities. It has not only advocated for this Constitutional ideal but has actively intervened in incidents wherein racial tensions have flared and created hostile environments. Through ongoing work, the Foundation keeps track of racial issues and responds consistently. Deepening the constitutional ideal of non-racialism and working towards this objective is done through 4 core functions at the Foundation. These include:

1. Promoting the values, rights and principles enshrined in the Freedom Charter and the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.
2. Organise seminars, lectures, debates and discussions and undertake research on issues which promote a nonracial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa.
3. Collect, record, promote and display, through historical artefacts and contemporary material, Kathrada's role in South Africa's liberation struggle and its relation to the role of other individuals, groups and movements both nationally and internationally.
4. Identify and support projects and programmes that will deepen non-racialism and create an equitable society

So as I have highlighted, the core function of the Foundation is to deepen non-racialism and it is from this that the conceptualisation and establishment of the Anti-Racism Network South Africa was born.

At a special United Nations session on the role of leadership in eliminating racism, which was held on the 21st of March 2014, Kathrada

shared his hopes and dreams of an organisation, much like Greenpeace, to be established to tackle the scourge of racism in South Africa and globally.

The Anti Racism Network South Africa was thus established and formally launched on the 14th of November 2015. Broadly put, The Anti Racism Network South Africa is a network of organizations working together to respond to the social and institutional crisis of racism. This initiative was initially launched alongside the Nelson Mandela Foundation and today, the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation, the Institute of Justice and Reconciliation and the Centre for the Advancement of Non-Racialism and Democracy serve as its secretariat.

The Anti Racism Network South Africa primarily coordinates and strengthens the multifaceted anti-racism efforts of nongovernmental, non-profit, community and faith-based organisations; sporting bodies; educational institutions; government departments; labour unions; business entities and individuals. It is the belief of the Network that the coordination of all sectors of society, is vital in the fight against racism and related forms of discrimination. It is essential that we use the collective weight of multiple organisations and individuals in ensuring that local efforts against racism are made national and that national efforts can be implemented at a local level.

Now I've mentioned two ideological concepts related to racism; namely non-racialism and anti-racism. I just want to take this opportunity to briefly discuss the two. During the Apartheid era, non-racialism was a rejection of the ideology of racism. As it exists today, it is a social ideal in which we as South Africans strive towards and is encapsulated in our Constitution as one of the fundamental principles of our Constitution. And in trying to achieve a non-racial world we have to be anti-racist in our actions. So anti-racism to the Foundation and the Network is the steps we need to take to realise a non-racial society. In other words, we view anti-racism as the life-long commitment whereby people actively confront, challenge, and dismantle racist attitudes, behaviours and norms in pursuit of racial justice and equity. It is this principle of anti-racism that informs the way the network operates and the kind of strategic objectives we strive for. ARNSA's ultimate vision is of a South Africa free from racism and oppressions in which all individuals have equal rights and access to resources without discrimination based on race.

In trying to achieve this, the network's primary work, broadly speaking, is focused on:

- Fostering and building a collective South African voice in order to dismantle racism (systemically, culturally and structurally)
- Facilitating and pioneering responses, both pro-active and reactive to the presence of racist actions and ideas.

- Advocating for redress of the negative consequences of racism and all forms of oppression.
- Ensuring that Anti-Racism and all form of inclusion are mainstreamed across all sectors of South Africa.
- Being a critical voice that is non-partisan and that speaks out without fear or favour on issues of racism and related forms of oppression.
- Influencing policy and decision making in South Africa towards the eradication of racism and to the mainstreaming of an anti-racist culture
- Advocating and lobbying interventions more broadly in society to advance the anti-racism agenda.

In line with these key objectives, some of the work that we have focused on this year includes:

- The development of a toolkit for educators that deals with multicultural classes and how to create an anti-racist culture within schools and institutions of learning
- Developing training materials in conjunction with an organisation called Show Racism the Red Card in the UK which deals with racism and all its manifestations in relation to bigotry on the basis of race, culture and ethnicity which we have streamlined mainly within the sporting sector
- The development of our Racism Reporting App which can be used by learners in schools as well as the broader public
- Advocating for a national anti-racism school policy that should be adopted at every public institution of learning to deal with the some of the persistent racially charged incidences that we continue to see emerging out of institutions of learning
- Supporting national and international strategies; namely the South African National Action Plan to Combat Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerances
- Undertaking programmes of public education, awareness and action
- Hosting our annual Anti-racism week which takes place between the 14th and 21st of March. The 21st of March is both Human Rights Day in South Africa and is marked globally as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination by the UN. Both days pay homage to the 69 lives lost during the Sharpeville Massacre in 1960
- As well as continuing to be a coordinating entity for organisations committed to eradicate or work for racial justice at a common front.

Building Peace and Ending Racism

There is no doubt that South Africa has made great strides in developing progressive policies and legislation post 1994. However, 28 years since the advent of democracy, we now find ourselves dealing with a resurgence of racism and racial discrimination which threatens our democracy.

Although 1994 marked the beginning of a new era, and our Constitution recognises the injustices of the past and was founded on the values of equality, the advancement of human rights and non-racialism, we seem to find ourselves drifting further away from peace and the eradication of racism.

Prior to 1994, access to rights and the quality of those rights depended largely on the colour of your skin. Today we see a continuation of that. South Africa's race relations has always been somewhat of a phenomenon compared to other countries as non-white people continue to be the vast majority. And if we look back at the history of Apartheid, we also understand how all other socio-economic rights was largely linked to race. So now in 2022, we are faced with high levels of corruption, poor service delivery and inequitable economic conditions which allow racism to destabilise our commitments to socio-economic rights and dignity intended to ensure equitable access to democracy and its freedoms.

Because of this, in the past couple of years we have seen a resurrection of right wing conservative ideas coming to the forefront which have led to heightened tensions in South Africa. On one hand, we have people who seem to believe that racism is no longer an issue that threatens South Africans, whilst on the other hand, we have people who view racism as the wound that continues to bleed into every facet of life.

Because of this, it is important that we continue to be intentional about how we build peace especially through dialogues and education. We hope that the implementation of the National Action Plan to Combat Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerances will begin to firmly set in place, a foundation that allows us to continue to foster peaceful and insightful engagement. However, it is necessary for our government to allocate appropriate resources and drive the fight against racism at every possible level in order for us to make much needed strides against racism in South Africa.

As the Network, our agenda continues to be the eradication of racism and despite the challenges and obstacles we face in pursuing that, we believe that it is possible. It is important that we continue to build a society that is anti-racist in its nature and a no tolerance zone for all forms of hate.

I would just like to end of with a snippet of Kathrada's speech at Nelson Mandela's funeral that really sums up our commitment to racism and the realisation of human rights "It is up to the present and next generations to take up the cudgels where we have left off. It is up to them, through service to deepen our democracy; entrench and defend our Constitution; eradicate poverty; eliminate inequality; fight corruption, and serve always with compassion, respect, integrity and tolerance. Above all, they must build our nation and break down the barriers that still divide us."



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