


## HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL – 57th SESSION

### Overview of Week 4 (30 September – 04 October 2024)

During the fourth week of the UN Human Rights Council, the Council will continue analyzing the Universal Periodic Review of selected countries, including **New Zealand, Afghanistan, Chile, Viet Nam, Uruguay, Yemen, Vanuatu, North Macedonia, Comoros, Slovakia, Eritrea, Cyprus, Dominican Republic, and Cambodia**. The Council will hold interactive dialogues under **Agenda Item 9<sup>1</sup>**. At the end, the Council will hold **General Debates under Agenda Items 7,<sup>2</sup> and 8<sup>3</sup>**. During the fourth week, the Council will organize **an annual discussion on the integration of a gender perspective throughout the work of the Human Rights Council and that of its mechanisms**. 

#### Panel discussion



**30 September: Annual discussion on the integration of a gender perspective throughout the work of the Human Rights Council and that of its mechanisms.**

#### **Agenda Item 9: Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance: follow-up to and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action**



**02 October: Enhanced Interactive dialogue with the High Commissioner and Independent Expert Mechanism to advance racial justice and equality in law enforcement, focusing on the *promotion and protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of Africans and of people of African descent against excessive use of force and other human rights violations by law enforcement officers through transformative change for racial justice and equality.***

Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

**A/HRC/57/67**: The report contained key elements **of intersectionality as an essential framework to combat systemic racism and confront the legacies of enslavement and colonialism**. It included measures taken by States and others aimed at integrating an intersectionality analysis, lens or perspective, and other actions to advance racial justice and equality. Disaggregated data and lived experiences continued to expose the systemic racism faced by Africans and people of African descent in different regions. Women and different groups of people of African descent – and individuals within those groups – experienced discrimination in qualitatively different ways in the light of their diverse identities. The High Commissioner’s agenda towards transformative change for racial justice and equality can support efforts to operationalize an intersectional approach. The High Commissioner concluded that a holistic application of that framework can be a game changer and calls upon States to adopt multi-pronged approaches towards its implementation. The Summit of the Future will be an important venue to advance discussions on reforming and revitalizing global

<sup>1</sup> Item 9: Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance: follow-up to and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

<sup>2</sup> Item 7: Human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories.

<sup>3</sup> Item 8: Follow-up to and implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action

governance and the international financial architecture so that it works for all people, such as regarding debt relief, and ensuring that climate action responds also to the needs of communities of African descent.

## Report of the International Independent Expert Mechanism to **Advance Racial Justice and Equality in Law Enforcement**

A/HRC/57/71<sup>4</sup>: In the report, the Mechanism set out an overview of its activities and its reflections and recommendations on the concrete steps needed to ensure access to justice, accountability, and redress for the excessive use of force and other human rights violations by law enforcement officials against Africans and people of African descent. **Broad impunity for the excessive use of force and other human rights violations against Africans and people of African descent by law enforcement officials persists and victims' rights to justice, truth, reparation, and guarantees of non-repetition are rarely fulfilled. Reparatory justice is long overdue.** The Mechanism explored **two essential elements to provide justice, accountability, and redress:** (a) the need for the collection, publication, and analysis of data disaggregated by race or ethnic origin regarding interactions with law enforcement authorities and the criminal justice system and; (b) the need to adopt alternative and complementary methods of policing to prevent further violations. The Mechanism believed that **three additional minimum steps are necessary to combat widespread impunity and to provide justice, accountability, and redress:** (a) Effective reporting, review, and investigation procedures; (b) Independent civilian oversight bodies; (c) Independent mechanisms to support victims and communities.

### **03 October: Interactive dialogue with the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent on the use of digital technology including artificial intelligence and consequences on people of African descent.**

A/HRC/57/70<sup>5</sup>: In the present report, the Working Group examined the **implications of digitalization, artificial intelligence (AI), and new and emerging technologies for people of African descent.** It analyzed embedded racial and other forms of bias, documented misuse, and the actual and potential discriminatory impact, as well as the positive potential, on the human rights of people of African descent, especially with regard to economic, social, and cultural rights (ESCRs). The Working Group found an alarming gap between the proliferation and widening application of AI systems and their governance mechanisms, which can result in disproportionate adverse effects on African descent populations, particularly in the protection and realization of their ESCRs. This is systematically overlooked by both public and private regulators, thereby contributing to the non-respect of obligations under international human rights law, threatening to compound and normalize the inherent racism and exacerbate racial discrimination and existing inequalities. The Working Group concluded by **recommending several positive measures at the international, national, and institutional levels for positive and non-discriminatory use of digitalization and AI** in the context of the ESCRs of people of African descent. Among others, **States must provide affordable and equal access to the internet, technological devices, stable, clean energy sources, and to life-long learning for all;** must invest in public education about digitalization, AI, e-governance, e-learning, e-health, e-finance, and diverse e-applications, making the internet accessible and available to all; and States must ensure that digitalization and the use of AI continue to be regulated, moderated, facilitated and remain subject to human oversight.

**[A/HRC/57/70/Add.1: visit to Norway from 11 to 20 December 2023](#)**, where the Working Group assessed the human rights situation of people of African descent and gathered information on their lived experiences. The Working Group welcomed the **Government's Action Plan on Racism and Discrimination (2024–2027)**, in which it envisages – by targeting the labor market, youth, and local communities – reducing inequalities and increasing social mobility through redistribution efforts, increasing labor market participation, including by integrating as many immigrants as possible into the labor market and enhancing participation in education. To ensure that refugees enjoy the same rights as the general population, the Government aims at speedy settlement of refugees through its **Introduction Programme for newcomers**, which applies only to refugees and not asylum-seekers or immigrants. To reduce and combat negative social control and honor-related violence, the Government has strengthened its ongoing **initiative of deploying diversity advisers in schools.** In conclusion, the WG set several recommendations to the government in order to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance; and to increase the full, equal, and meaningful

<sup>4</sup> As of 28 September, only the English Advance Edited Version is available.

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participation of persons from diverse backgrounds, especially those who have traditionally been marginalized, in all spheres of society, while acknowledging the need for strong government leadership on the matter.

*04 October:* Interactive dialogue on the report of the **Permanent Forum on People of African Descent in its third session.**

[A/HRC/57/68](#): The report focused on the deliberations, conclusions, and recommendations of the third session, held in April 2024. The first thematic discussion was focused on the issue of reparations, sustainable development, and economic justice. The second thematic discussion was focused on education, with an emphasis on the need to overcome systemic racism and historical harm. The third-panel discussion focused on culture and recognition. The fourth panel was titled “Second International Decade for People of African Descent: expectations and Challenges”. Critically, **realizing equality should include recognizing and addressing systemic and structural racial inequalities** that hinder the enjoyment of the human dignity, rights, and freedoms of people of African descent. The Permanent Forum affirms that **education is a fundamental human right, the cornerstone of just, non-discriminatory, and inclusive societies**, and an essential tool for the effective exercise of human rights. To guarantee the right to high-quality education for people of African descent and combat systemic and structural racism against them, Member States are urged to guarantee equal access to high-quality education for people of African descent by ensuring access to high-quality schools. The Permanent Forum highlighted the **significance, resilience, and rich contributions of African** diasporic cultural, artistic, intellectual, political, and activist movements and African-derived spiritualities in the diaspora. The Permanent Forum recognized the active participation of young people and civil society organizations in its third session and heeded their calls for greater engagement.

*04 October:* Presentation of report of Ad Hoc Committee on Elaboration of Complementary Standards, and Group of Independent Eminent Experts, HC oral update on sports and racism, followed by general debate.

[A/HRC/57/72](#): The report contained outcomes from the thematic discussions of the ninth and tenth sessions of the **Group of Independent Eminent Experts on the Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action**. The Group expresses concern over the manifestations of a lack of political will and insufficient dedicated resources, at national, regional, and international levels, to effectively implement the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action more than 20 years after its adoption. The Group reiterates the importance of the global outreach programs led by the United Nations on public information and mobilization in support of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. In conclusion, the Group emphasizes that human rights obligations to achieve racial equality and ensure non-discrimination extend to all areas of government policy and influence, including the design and application of artificial intelligence technologies. The Group calls on Member States, the United Nations system, and all stakeholders, including civil society representatives, to redouble their efforts to fully and effectively implement the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

## Agenda Item 10: Technical assistance and capacity-building



*04 October:* Enhanced interactive dialogue on the High Commissioner’s report on addressing the challenges and barriers to the full realization and enjoyment of the human rights of the people of the **Marshall Islands**, stemming from the State’s nuclear legacy.

A/HRC/57/77<sup>6</sup>: The report addressed the **challenges and barriers to the full realization and enjoyment of the human rights of the people of the Marshall Islands, stemming from the State’s nuclear legacy**. The nuclear legacy is not just a chapter in history, but a continuing reality for the Marshallese people. The Human Rights Committee noted serious human rights **concerns arising from the testing of nuclear weapons**, and the International Court of Justice recognized the serious danger that they pose to present and future generations. Sixty-seven known nuclear tests were conducted by the **United States between 1946 and 1958 in the Marshall Islands**. Those tests had a total yield equivalent to 108,490,500 tons of dynamite – approximately 7,232 times the explosive power of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima, Japan, and equivalent to dropping said atomic bomb daily for nearly 20 years. **Nuclear testing and its impacts should be assessed against applicable human rights obligations**. As part of its own human rights obligations, the Government of the Marshall Islands has taken proactive, community-led measures to address the nuclear legacy, which it should pursue with further steps. The High Commissioner concluded by providing **recommendations to both**, the governments of the Marshall Islands and the United States.

### General Debate

*01-02 October: General Debate under Agenda Item 5.*

*02 October: General Debate under Agenda Item 6.*

*02-03 October: General Debate under Agenda Item 7.*

*03 October: General Debate under Agenda Item 8.*

*The Geneva Centre’s summaries of selected meetings are available [here](#).*

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