

**United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent**

**Regional Meeting for Europe, North America and Central Asia**

**PANEL DISCUSSION JUSTICE – 23 NOVEMBER 2017**

**15.00-18.00**

Moderator: **Mr. Sabelo Gumedze**, Chair of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent (WGEPAD)

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Lines Momodou Malcolm Jallow MP

Thank you Mr Chair.

I want to thank you for inviting me to speak here today on the burning issue of justice for people of African Descent. As you have mentioned, I will speak today from my perspective as a political representative in and newly appointed member of the Swedish Parliament, but also from civil society, from the Pan African Movement for Justice in Sweden and the European Network Against Racism.

Yet, no matter the standpoint, central to any fight for equality for people of African Descent is the call for justice. By this I mean justice in terms of reparations for the historical injustices we have endured. I mean justice in terms of accountability for the violence, discrimination and inequality we continue to experience. And I mean justice in terms of equal access to rights, freedoms and opportunities now and in the future.

I would like to speak to the outstanding structures of injustice experienced specifically by people of African Descent in Europe, and then go on to what needs to happen to change, from my experience as the former Chair of the Steering Committee on Afrophobia at the European Network Against Racism (ENAR).

First, a few words about the two civil society organisations I represent here today. The Pan African Movement for Justice and The European Network Against Racism ENAR. ENAR is a European network of NGOs working to combat racism and related discriminations that combines advocacy and cross-communities action. ENAR and its members including the Pan African Movement for Justice have a strong expertise on Afrophobia, as well as other forms of racism.

In 2016 ENAR produced the **first ever pan-European comparative report on Afrophobia in the European Union**, setting out the available evidence on racism experienced by PAD in Europe. You may find both publications in the room, and on ENAR's website. I would like to share some of the findings.

Afrophobia is a specific form of racism that refers to any act of violence or discrimination, fuelled by historical abuses and negative stereotyping, and leading to the exclusion and dehumanisation of people of African descent. Afrophobia refers to anti-Black racism and it correlates to historically repressive structures of colonialism and the transatlantic slave trade.

It is estimated that there are 15 million people of African descent and Black Europeans in Europe. We are one of the largest minorities in Europe, and yet, there is not one single European or national policy dedicated to advancing the rights of people of African Descent. And yet, Afrophobia is widespread, and evidence can be presented in numerous areas of public life.

**Racist violence:** People of African descent and Black Europeans are victims of particularly violent racist crime. In 2009, the European Union found that 33% of Sub-Saharan Africans in Europe have been victims of at least one racially motivated crime that year. In 2008 in Sweden, Afro-Swedes were the most exposed to hate crimes, seeing 24% increase. In 2015, one man stabbed three persons to death in what was qualified as a racist attack in Sweden.

In **criminal justice** we see that discriminatory policing and ethnic profiling are long standing issues. Studies have found that in Paris, people perceived as 'Black' were overall six times more likely to be stopped by police than White people. In the UK, Black people are eight times more likely to be stopped and searched by the police than White people according to latest police data. In Germany, we see a repeated denial of the fact that Black people are being racially profiled.

Where we have data, we see that **Black people are overrepresented in prisons, and are increasingly targets of police violence.** 2017 has seen numerous examples of violence against black people at the hands of the police, including Rashan Charles the UK, who died in July after being restrained by the police. In February Theo Luhaka endured a violent arrest including sexual abuse at the hands of the police in France. Further, new evidence has emerged in the devastating case of Oury Jalloh, a man who burned alive in the custody of German police on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2005, contradicting police accounts that he said set himself on fire in the police cell. We must hold those accountable for Oury Jalloh's death. For all of these cases the authorities placed the blame on the victim for their abuse - and sometimes even death - in police custody. We have still not seen justice for these people, and for so many more.

As for **outcomes in other fields of life**, across all the indicators, education, health, criminal justice, and employment Black people are discriminated against, have unequal opportunities and denied their rights. This structural inequality is commonplace across the whole of Europe, and yet, I repeat, there is not a single European wide policy to address this.

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These findings from the ENAR Shadow Report are just attempts to categorize the problem in the absence of systematic data. However, it shows that Afrophobia is a problem that is both wide and structural, both individual and societal. The justice we seek therefore requires individual accountability for perpetrators of racial violence and discrimination, but also structural transformation. How do we achieve this?

As signatories to the UN, Member States have the obligation to ensure Black people enjoy the rights to equal treatment and non-discrimination. It is high time that this situation of people of African Descent receives proper recognition. Inherent in this must be a recognition of past injustices against people of African descent, and steps toward reparations and restitution. [*Louis-Georges Tin will elaborate on this after me.*]

Regionally, and at **level of the European Union**, we are calling for this in the form of an EU framework for National Strategies to combat Afrophobia. In September this year, members of the European Parliament discussed the issue of Afrophobia for the first time in an official meeting. ENAR presented the Shadow Report as an initial outline of the problem at hand.

At the **national level**, in line with the Durban programme of action, **Member States should adopt Action Plans to combat racism and specifically, Afrophobia**. These plans should recognize historical and structural injustices faced by people of African Descent, and take concrete steps to address this. In these National Action plans, Member States need to include the collection of equality data based on self-identification, to provide sound evidence for structural discrimination. They also need to set out real and effective policies to address racist violence against people of African descent, but also tackle structural disadvantages experienced by people of African descent in all areas of public life.

In the field of criminal justice, these plans need to ensure real justice for victims of racist violence and their families, the end of racial profiling, and the accountability of abusive behavior of state actors against our brothers and sisters by the criminal justice systems.

Looking wider at EU policies on **migration** we see the links between discrimination and exclusion of people of African descent in Europe, and the global racism underlying the international border system. To maintain 'fortress Europe' European States have profiled, detaining and deporting Black people back to danger. A new plan from the European Union seeks to trap migrants in asylum processing centres in Libya, infringing on their right to claim asylum in a safe country. This is despite the knowledge of European states of the ongoing enslavement and torture of Black people in Libya.

(Provide example here)

**In view of this,**

We (The coalition of civil society organisations) recommend the OHCHR:

To promote safe access to the asylum procedure in the European Union with [humanitarian visas to the European Union](#);

To call on the European Union to cease externalizing responsibility for immigration control to African countries, which contributes significantly to the massive human rights violations currently taking place in Libya, Algeria and Sudan and along migration routes;

Lastly, **at all levels**, we need solidarity, resources, and coordination for strong networks and coalitions to tackle Afrophobia. As activists, NGOs and policymakers, we need to make the links between the experiences of PAD across the world, and find global solutions. This includes and making links with the fights against other forms of racism, mobilizing in broader movements, and recognizing that all oppression is connected, therefore all fights for justice must be connected too.

We need to see the links between the death of a man in German police custody, the exclusion faced by Black and indigenous women in Latin America, to the enslavement of Black people in Libya. Achieving justice for just one is not enough.

To conclude, following the pillars of the UN Decade for People of African Descent [recognition, justice and development]. We need recognition of the particular inequalities, racism and exclusion experienced by people of African Descent. We need justice for those injustices, past and present. We then need the commitment, solidarity and resources to ensure the development of people of African descent, in Europe and beyond.

Thank you for your attention.