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Violent manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, Afrophobia, xenophobia and related intolerance through extremist nationalist and populist ideologies, hate speech and incitement to hatred (19 March) and the thematic discussion on Administration of justice: Police violence, prisons and accountability (20 March). [Oral Presentation](#)

Chairperson,

I am very glad to be back to this Working Group as a guest. It is an extraordinary honour for me to be here. You are doing some very important work which I fully support. I am especially glad about the kind of dialogue you have with the civil society and I trust you will continue with that. The impact of your work will in due time be recognised by the entire human rights community. This is the kind of work which is oftentimes not recognised but that which gives us hope. It is this hope that we need to share and keep alive.

Chairperson,

A failed election candidate for Italy's far-right Northern League Luca Traini, 28 years old, was arrested after six people were shot in the small city near Italy's east coast, 200km (125 miles) east of Rome. Police said the attack was racially motivated. He targeted anyone black. He drove around in his Italian car and when he saw any black person he shot them.

He shot 29-year-old Jennifer Otioto. On the morning of 3<sup>rd</sup> February, Otioto was waiting at a bus stop in the town of Macerata, when Luca Traini, drove towards her in his Alfa Romeo and shot her. He also shot Kofi Wilson, 20 years, from Ghana who had been on his way to get a haircut. Kofi was shot in the chest. Luca Traini shot four more people of African descent that day. Thankfully, all survived. The only reason he shot them was the colour of their skin. His only motive; hate.

The far right accuses migrants of importing crime and disease and taking their jobs. It is the kind of rhetoric that incites hate and violence towards people of African Descent in Europe.

Whiles most Italians would condemn such kind of violence, hate speech directed towards migrants and black people is on the rise across Europe.

Racism is the most relevant underlying explanation to understanding increased violence towards people of African Descent in Europe and North America.

If you do not understand how racism permeates the very social fabric of our societies, you can never really understand the mechanisms needed to redress this entrenched form of moral and ethical injustice.

It is a matter of material equality of rights and justice. Racism is perpetuated through hate speech and manifested by violence. Racism is a form of both visible and invisible violence. It can be physical violence, but it can also be through other means.

There are tremendous disparities in the ways in which violence affects communities. America's "Black lives matter" movement arose out of the deaths of black people because blackness has effectively been criminalised in the United States. This is nothing new. It has its roots in Slavery and colonialism. From "slave catchers" to "stop and frisk" to racial profiling. Black people in Europe and the United States are particularly exposed to police violence as well as racist violence.

Armed with a rifle with laser sight, John Ausonius spread fear in the streets of Stockholm in the early 1990s. The search for the laser man (Lasermannen) became one of the largest police investigations of all times. It was a time of terror and shock for all migrants really.

His first victim in Sweden was an Eritrean student. John Ausonius, was finally apprehended, but it took a year. From August 1991 to January 1992, he shot 10 people and killed one person.

All victims were men of immigrant background. His only motive was hatred and racism. He fed on hate speech and it inspired him to that level of violence.

People of African descent are the most invisible 'visible' minority in Europe and are the scapegoats for all issues. Racial profiling practices by police is a real problem and disproportionately affect people of African descent.

In some European cities, People of African Descent were overall six times more likely to be stopped and searched by police than White people.

There are various frameworks for looking at violence as well as racism. The framework developed by Camara Jones ([Jones, 2002](#)) defines racism as a system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on phenotype that unfairly disadvantages some individuals and communities, unfairly advantages other individuals and communities, and saps the strength of the whole society through the waste of human resources.

According to this framework, racism has more than one effect in that it does not merely disadvantage those affected by it, but gives advantage to others, which in the context of violence means there are some young people who are more likely to be victimized and others who are less likely to be victimized because of privilege and birth position.

This framework can be applied to explain the rise of Afrophobia in Europe. Anti-Black racism, or Afrophobia, is what most people instinctively associate with racism. Afrophobia is a relatively new term used to denote key specific forms of global racism which people of African descent have experienced throughout the history of racism.

The framework for racism includes three levels at which racism functions ([Jones, 2000](#)). The first is institutional racism, defined as the differential access to the goods, services, and opportunities of society by race. Institutional racism, explains the association between social class and race. For example, it explains why blacks are disproportionately jailed and killed by gun fire on the streets. Unequal access to Justice is an example of institutional racism.

The next level, personally mediated racism, is what is often thought of when discussing racism, and it is defined as the differential assumptions about the abilities, motives, and intents of others by race—prejudice—or the differential actions based on those assumptions, that is, discrimination. This framework holds that institutional racism is mediated through individuals. For example, when the landlord denies you an apartment because you are black or when you do not get that job because you are black.

The third level of racism is internalized racism, which represents that acceptance by the stigmatized races of negative messages about their own abilities and intrinsic worth. For example, when Toni Iwobi, an immigrant from Nigeria, is far-right League's spokesman on immigration and proposes measures that amounts to self-stigmatization.

Racism and extreme right-wing activity are gaining ground in the whole of Europe.

Many violent crimes with racist overtones have been committed in recent years inspired by hate speech propagated by the growing flora of anti-migrant and racist parties in Europe.

Last year Mr. Viktor Mellin, leader of an obscure neo Nazist party, Nordisk Motstånd's Rörelsen, planted bombs at a refugee housing centre in Sweden. This type of violent racist activity is increasing in Europe.

It is my view that right-wing extremism has an impact on mainstream political parties and policy. The triangular shift of policy in order to minimize the political space for populist parties and extremist parties leads often to harsher anti-immigration policies and eventually to anti-migrant sentiment and finally racism fuelled by hate speech. This, paradoxically, has led to unprecedented electoral gains for far-right parties.

For example;

- **In Austria**, the Eurosceptic and anti-immigrant Freedom Party (FPÖ) came close to winning the presidency.
- **In Germany**, the openly anti-immigration and Islamophobic Alternative for Germany (AfD) is the third-biggest party in the Bundestag.
- **In France**, Marine Le Pen's National Front (FN), took nearly 34 percent of votes in the May presidential election run-off.
- **In Netherlands**, the anti-Islam Freedom Party (PVV) of Geert Wilders became the second party in parliament.
- **In Hungary**, the Movement for a Better Hungary, known as Jobbik, is ultra-nationalist and Eurosceptic. It is the second largest party. Prime Minister Viktor Orban himself has a hard-line anti-immigration stance.
- **In Italy**, the far-right Northern League is 2<sup>nd</sup> largest party in Parliament.
- **In Greece**, the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn has seven percent and 17 MPs.

- **In Sweden**, Sverigedemokraterna with roots in the neo-Nazi movement, is the third biggest party with 48 Mps and 13 percent of the vote.
- **In Bulgaria**, the nationalist United Patriots coalition entered government for the first time.
- **In Slovakia**, the People's Party Our Slovakia has 14 seats in parliament.

And the list can go on. The impact of these far-right parties in pushing mainstream parties to adopt policies, often anti-migrant, consequently anti-black policy is clear.

Recently, the Danish government decided to empower the police to adopt a regime where the same type of crime will attract different sanctions depending on which part of the city one lives.

This, in fact, is structural and institutional discrimination. Ultimately, it will impact people of African descent negatively because they live predominantly in those affected areas. While the motive is to combat crime, it risks criminalising a certain group of people because of where they reside, when indeed, the main issue is about poverty.

It is this kind of policy that leads to gains for extreme right parties and emboldens such parties to raise up the tone of their anti-migrant rhetoric. This can potentially translate into denial of equal access to justice. It is a social experiment based on discrimination and injustice. It is precisely the kind of well-intended but ill-advised policy that feeds the rise of far-right parties in Europe. It is important that policymakers take into consideration that there are tremendous disparities in the ways in which violence affects communities.

And yet, Chairperson,

I am hopeful, because the civil society and the human rights community in Denmark have come together to push back on the extremities of the proposal. This is the kind of intervention that needs our backing and which I encourage the working group to support. Structural and institutional discriminatory policies, intended or unintended, can be remedied through resilient and coordinated effort by the human rights community and the civil society working together.

Chairperson, I am hopeful because, 3 Neo Nazis were convicted and jailed in Sweden for the bombing on the refugee housing. The reaction of the Swedish state in mounting the second largest police investigation in history in reaction to the shootings by the John Aussenius shows that states have the capacity and can push back on individuals who are violently racist.

Finally, Chairperson, I am hopeful, because, several thousand anti-racism protesters rallied in the central Italian town of Macerata, one week after the far-right activist shot and wounded Jennifer Otioto, Kofi Wilson and four other people because of the colour of their skin.

The protest was organised by the African community and the civil society. It is the civil society that gives me hope. I am asking the working group to work together with the civil society and support it. I have come here because I know Justice is possible. Our survival as a human species depends upon our ability to care about everyone's human rights and basic dignity. We need to deliver ourselves us from injustice and hatred, from discrimination, and racism; it's about time we find ways and means to stand reconciled as humanity, through equal rights and justice. I thank you.