**40th session of the Human Rights Council**

**Commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**

**Debate on the mitigation and countering of rising nationalist populism and extreme supremacist ideologies**

*Concept note (as of 25 February 2019)*

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| **Date**  **and venue:** | **15 March 2018, 4 - 6 p.m., Palais des Nations,** [**Room XX**](http://www.unog.ch/80256EE60057CB67/(httpRooms)/4C2700FCE9684AD780256EF9005A65FE?OpenDocument&unid=BAE3AF717207A5AF80256EF80049C552)**, Geneva**  *(will be broadcast live and archived on* [*http://webtv.un.org*](http://webtv.un.org)*)* | |
| **Objectives:** | The debate will aim at:   * Discussing the rise and manifestations of nationalist populism and extreme supremacist ideologies in the world, and focus on how to mitigate and counter them; * Generating action-oriented recommendations. | |
| **Chair:** | **H.E. Ms. Vesna Batistić Kos**, Vice-President of the Human Rights Council | |
| **Opening**  **statement:** | **Ms. Michelle Bachelet**, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights | |
| **Panellists:** | * **Ms. Sithembile Nombali Mbete**, Lecturer at the Department of Political Sciences at the University of Pretoria (South Africa) * **Mr. Pedro Marcelo Mouratian**, Diversity Director of the Centro de Estudios para la Gobernanza (Governance Study Centre) (Argentina) * **Mr. Rafal Pankowski**, 'NEVER AGAIN' Association, Collegium Civitas (Poland) * **Ms. Irene Santiago**, Specialist on peace and security, Peace Adviser to the Mayor of Davao City (Philippines) | |
| **Outcome:** | An informal summary of the discussion will be prepared. | |
| **Mandate:** | The General Assembly, in paragraph 27 of its resolution 73/262 of 22 December 2018 entitled “A global call for concrete action for the total elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action,” requested the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Human Rights Council to continue to convene annual commemorative meetings of the Assembly and the Council during the commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, with the appropriate focus and themes, and to hold a debate on the mitigation and countering of rising nationalist populism and extreme supremacist ideologies, with the participation of the Secretary-General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and in this context encourages the participation of eminent personalities active in the struggle against racial discrimination. | |
| **Format:** | The duration of the annual debate will be limited to two hours. The opening statement and initial presentations by the panellists will be followed by an interactive discussion divided into two slots. A maximum of one hour will be set aside for the podium, including opening statements, panellist presentations and their responses to questions and concluding remarks. The remaining hour will be reserved for interventions from the floor, divided into two slots, for Member States and observers (2x12), national human rights institutions (2x1) and non-governmental organizations (2x2). The possibility for panellists to intervene between the two slots will depend on the amount of time used at the start of the debate.  The list of speakers for the discussion will be established at the beginning of the debate and, as per practice, statements by high-level dignitaries and groups will be moved to the beginning of the list. Each speaker will have two minutes to raise issues and to ask panellists questions. Interpretation will be provided in the six United Nations official languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish). | |
| **Background:** | In its resolution 73/262, the General Assembly expressed its alarm at the spread in many parts of the world of various racist extremist movements based on ideologies that seek to promote populist, nationalist, right-wing agendas and racial superiority.  The Assembly deplored the ongoing and resurgent scourges of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in many regions of the world, which often target migrants and refugees, as well as people of African descent. It also expressed its concern that some political leaders and parties have supported creating such an environment.  The resurgence of political movements and parties, which explore aggressive nationalism, promote populist and right-wing ideas and extreme supremacist ideologies is alarming. Also these practices fuel racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, which is of concern to the international community.  Populist discourse is often that of “real” citizens, “nationalists”, “foreigners”, “us and them”, focusing on national and racial “purity”, and depicts minorities, foreigners, migrants and asylum seekers as invaders; it can become virulent and viral in the internet age.  The fundamental international standard for equality and non-discrimination is set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which reaffirms that, “Everyone is entitled to all human rights and freedoms, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”.  The preamble of the International Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination is clear in its conviction that “any doctrine of superiority based on racial differentiation is scientifically false, morally condemnable, socially unjust and dangerous, and that there is no justification for racial discrimination, in theory or in practice, anywhere.”  According to article 4 of the International Convention, State Parties shall condemn all propaganda and all organizations which are based on ideas or theories of superiority of one race or group of persons of one colour or ethnic origin, or which attempt to justify or promote racial hatred and discrimination in any form, and should undertake to adopt immediate and positive measures designed to eradicate all incitement to, or acts of, such discrimination. States shall declare an offence punishable by law all dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or hatred, incitement to racial discrimination, as well as all acts of violence or incitement to such acts against any race or group of persons of another colour or ethnic origin, and also the provision of any assistance to racist activities, including the financing thereof; they shall declare illegal and prohibit organizations, and also organized and all other propaganda activities, which promote and incite racial discrimination, and shall recognize participation in such organizations or activities as an offence punishable by law; and shall not permit public authorities or public institutions, national or local, to promote or incite racial discrimination.  These issues, including issues of incitement to racial, national and religious hatred and freedom of expression and opinion, are also further addressed in the General Recommendation 35: Combatting Racist Hate Speech, adopted by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and in the General Comment 34 of the Human Rights Committee in article 19: Freedoms of Opinion and Expression.  The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA) adopted by the 2001 World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, and the 2009 Durban Review Conference also considered these issues. In paragraph 86 of DDPA States are urged “to promote measures to deter the emergence of and to counter neo-fascist, violent nationalist ideologies which promote racial hatred and racial discrimination, as well as racist and xenophobic sentiments, including measures to combat the negative influence of such ideologies…”  The DDPA underlines “the key role that politicians and political parties can play in combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and encourages political parties to take concrete steps to promote equality, solidarity and non-discrimination in society.” Politicians and political parties can develop voluntary codes of conduct so their members refrain from public statements and actions that encourage or incite racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.  These international frameworks also suggest a number of other actions that can and should be taken to mitigate and counter rising nationalist populism and extreme supremacist ideologies, including human rights education campaigns and awareness-raising initiatives, counter narratives and the role of the media, a complementary international standard to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and the withdrawal of reservations to the Convention. | |
| Background  documents: | * [General Assembly resolution 73/262](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/73/262) of 22 December 2018 entitled “A global call for concrete action for the total elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action” * [Human Rights Council resolution 36/24](http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/RES/36/24) of 29 September 2017 entitled “From rhetoric to reality: a global call for concrete action against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related Intolerance” * [New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/71/1) (General Assembly resolution 71/1 of 19 September 2016) * Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the promotion and protection of the human rights of migrants in the context of large movements [(A/HRC/33/67) and OHCHR web page with inputs thereto](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Migration/Pages/LargeMovements.aspx)) * [OHCHR Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights at International Borders (2014)](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Migration/OHCHR_Recommended_Principles_Guidelines.pdf) * [Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, General Recommendation No. 35 on combating racist hate speech (2013)](http://docstore.ohchr.org/SelfServices/FilesHandler.ashx?enc=6QkG1d%2fPPRiCAqhKb7yhssyNNtgI51ma08CMa6o7Bglz8iG4SuOjovEP%2bcqr8joDoVEbW%2bQ1MoWdOTNEV99v6FZp9aSSA1nZya6gtpTo2JUBMI0%2boOmjAwk%2b2xJW%2bC8e) * [Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 34 on Article 19: Freedoms of opinion and expression](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/docs/GC34.pdf) * [Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (2001)](https://www.un.org/WCAR/durban.pdf) * Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the expert workshops on the prohibition of incitement to national, racial or religious hatred [(A/HRC/22/17/Add.4)](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/HRC/22/17/Add.4) * Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, Tendayi Achiume, to the General Assembly on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance ([A/73/305](https://undocs.org/A/73/305)) * Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief ([A/HRC/40/44](https://undocs.org/A/HRC/40/44)) |