



Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Director-General for Legal Affairs

International Independent Expert
Mechanism to Advance Racial
Justice and Equality in Law
Enforcement

Office of the High Commissioner
for Human Rights
Palace of Nations
CH-1211 GENEVA 10
Switzerland

Communication from the International Independent Expert Mechanism
to Advance Racial Justice and Equality in Law Enforcement

(Ref. ILEM/KK/031123)

Dear Members of the Expert Mechanism,

1. In a letter of 3 November 2023, members of the International Independent Expert Mechanism to Advance Racial Justice and Equality in Law Enforcement ('the Expert Mechanism') invite the Swedish Government to provide certain information. The invitation concerns both general measures taken by Sweden to combat racism, in particular Afrophobia, and information on how the Swedish Security Service has carried out its work during an investigation involving a human rights defender and politician of African descent.
2. The Swedish Government's policy is that racism and other expressions of xenophobia and discrimination cannot be accepted. Such phenomena are harmful not only to the victims, but society as a whole. They contribute to polarisation and must be combatted with full force.
3. In recent years, there have been numerous initiatives to address racism, including Afrophobia. Sweden has a national plan to combat racism, similar forms of hostility and hate crime, which has a comprehensive approach to the work on these issues carried out by a number of agencies, regional and local actors, and civil society organisations. The overarching goal of the national plan is to create a strategic, effective and coherent work against racism, similar forms of hostility and hate crime in Sweden.

4. The national plan is complemented by five specific action programmes to combat different forms of racism, including one on Afrophobia. The action programme includes both measures aimed at bringing to light and combating Afrophobia, and measures aimed at combating racism at large.

5. The action programmes are based on the strategic areas set out in the national plan and dialogues with representatives of civil society, reports on the prevalence of racism and hate crimes in Sweden and recommendations from regional and international human rights bodies. For example, the need for a wide range of initiatives to combat Afrophobia has been highlighted in the UN General Assembly resolution which proclaimed 2015–2024 the International Decade for People of African Descent (A/RES/68/237). The programmes are furthermore in line with the EU Anti-racism Action Plan 2020–2025. The Swedish action programme to combat Afrophobia contains measures for the period 2022–2024.

6. Moreover, the Government has allocated additional funding of SEK 20 million for the budget year 2024 and intends to provide an additional SEK 10 million for 2025 and 2026, to the work against racism, other xenophobia, and discrimination. This reinforcement means that the work to prevent and counteract various forms of racism and other xenophobia continues with a high level of ambition.

7. In its communication, the Expert Mechanism raises the issue of how law enforcement authorities in Sweden investigate potential hate crimes.

8. The Swedish Police Authority has a high level of ambition in its work against hate crimes. There is a national point of contact for these questions, and investigations on hate crimes are conducted by specialised investigators. Furthermore, the Police Authority has created specific hate crime units in Stockholm, Gothenburg, and Malmö.

9. In 2021, the Police Authority was given an assignment by the Government to focus on hate crimes and other crimes that threaten democracy. The main purpose was to develop and improve the Police Authority's ability to combat all types of hate crimes. A part of the assignment was to undertake competence-enhancing efforts within the Police Authority and to report the results of the work conducted and how this has strengthened the capacity to investigate crimes. Another part of the assignment concerned cooperation between the Police

Authority and relevant actors, but also dialogue with groups that are particularly affected by hate crimes.

10. In its final report of 2023, the Police Authority concluded that it has increased its capacity to prevent and investigate hate crimes through training of police officers, including on internet related hate crime, as well as enhanced its cooperation with other authorities and civil society actors. In addition, the Police Authority has enhanced its dialogue with vulnerable groups and national minorities. Dialogue is seen as an important tool to build trust and increase the reporting rate of hate crime.

11. Finally, as regards the individual case raised by the Expert Mechanism in its letter, the Swedish Security Service is in charge of the security of Members of Parliament. Dignitary protection is comprised of various elements which enhance security, mainly preventive actions. The protection is dependent on continuous assessments made by the Security Service in relation to the protected person. Based on the assessments, appropriate protective measures are put in place. Assessments and security measures regarding individuals is classified information and the Security Service does not communicate on protection in individual cases.

12. The Government remains at the disposal of the Expert Mechanism, should further information be requested.

Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration.



Elinor Hammar skjöld
Ambassador, Director-General for Legal Affairs