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Call for inputs for the preparation of the report of the UN Secretary General pursuant to the UN General Assembly resolution 77/205 “A global call for concrete action for the 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”

The Ombudsman for Children in Sweden is a government agency established in 1993 representing children’s rights and interests on the basis of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Ombudsman is an independent national institution based on the Paris Principles that monitors the implementation of the Convention in municipalities, regions and government agencies. The Ombudsman identifies weaknesses in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, proposes changes to laws and ordinances, collects and disseminates knowledge and information about the situation of children and advocates and participates in the public debate.

The Ombudsman for Children in Sweden welcomes the opportunity to provide input to the Secretary-General’s report and wishes to provide the following information.

Racial discrimination and inequality experienced by children and youth of African descent in all areas of life, including the administration of justice, law enforcement, education, health, family life and development (paragraph 20)

The Ombudsman for Children in Sweden refers to its 2021 report entitled: *”Om barns och ungas utsatthet för rasism”*¹, which, conducted at the request of the Swedish Government, mapped existing research and knowledge regarding children’s and young people’s exposure and experience of racism in Sweden.

The mapping showed that few recent studies have focused exclusively on Afro-Swedish children’s experiences of racism in Sweden. Instead, the group has often been included in other broader studies on children with a migration background or children in suburban areas, as well as on specific diasporas such as e.g. Somali Swedes. There is thus a substantive **lack of research and a**

¹ [Om barns och ungas utsatthet för rasism](https://www.barnombudsmannen.se/stallningstaganden/publikationer/om-barns-och-ungas-utsatthet-for-rasism/), available at: <https://www.barnombudsmannen.se/stallningstaganden/publikationer/om-barns-och-ungas-utsatthet-for-rasism/> (in Swedish only).

knowledge gap regarding the situation of children and youth of African descent in Sweden.

In this context, the Ombudsman for Children would also like to reiterate the observation made in its Supplementary report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child in August 2022 para 19 (b)² in which it noted that **the lack of disaggregated data** on the situation of children in all spheres of life pose a considerable obstacle to an adequate analysis. This applies particularly to issues related to discrimination.

A study conducted in 2014, entitled “*the Afrofobia report*”, which was included in the Ombudsman’s 2021 report, found that children of African descent are particularly vulnerable in **the education system**, that their grades are lower compared to those of their peers and that fewer children of African descent are admitted to secondary education.³ Children of African descent also testified to experiencing discrimination as well as low expectations from teachers, something which lead to lower self-esteem and confidence in school.⁴

Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance targeting migrants and refugees (preambular paragraphs 9 and 10)

In its 2021 report cited above, the Ombudsman for Children also interviewed 73 children and young people aged 12 to 18 about their experiences and exposure to racism in Sweden.⁵ The results showed that racism is part of many children's everyday life from an early age and throughout their upbringing. A majority of the children also expressed a feeling of exclusion and of not being heard. In this context, the Ombudsman reiterates its previous view, delineated in its Supplementary report submitted to the Committee on the Rights of the Child in August 2022, that the right of the child to be heard is not sufficiently considered in Sweden. This applies particularly to migrant and refugee children. Work on children’s participation needs to be systematized and the equal opportunity of children to make their voices heard needs to be ensured.⁶

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² The Ombudsman for Children in Sweden, 2022, Supplementary Report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (https://www.barnombudsmannen.se/globalassets/dokument/barnkonventionen/fns-barnrattskommitte/2022/supplementary_report_sweden_final_2208015.pdf see para 19 (b)).

³ Afrofobi En kunskapsöversikt över afrosvenskars situation i dagens Sverige, [Afrofobi-20140203-för-webben.pdf](https://www.afrofobi.se/afrofobi-20140203-for-webben.pdf) (mkcentrum.se) (available in Swedish only).

⁴ Ibid page 97.

⁵ Om barns och unga utsatthet för rasism, available at: <https://www.barnombudsmannen.se/stallningstaganden/publikationer/om-barns-och-ungas-utsatthet-for-rasism/> (in Swedish only).

⁶ The Ombudsman for Children in Sweden, 2022, Supplementary Report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (https://www.barnombudsmannen.se/globalassets/dokument/barnkonventionen/fns-barnrattskommitte/2022/supplementary_report_sweden_final_2208015.pdf see paras. 14 a-c