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## Third Committee

### Summary record of the 41st meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 27 October 2023, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Banaken Elel (Vice-Chair) . . . . . (Cameroon)

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*In the absence of Mr. Marschik (Austria), Ms. Banaken Elel (Cameroon), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.*

**Agenda item 69: Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance** (*continued*)

**(a) Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance** (*continued*) (A/78/18, A/78/277, A/78/302 and A/78/385)

**(b) Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action** (*continued*) (A/78/197, A/78/273, A/78/317 and A/78/538)

**Agenda item 70: Right of peoples to self-determination** (*continued*) (A/78/261 and A/78/535)

1. **Ms. Shepherd** (Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination), introducing the annual report of the Committee (A/78/18), said that the Committee had been focusing on three main areas. The first area related to persistent and rising online racist hate speech, which had led to violence and xenophobic rhetoric against certain groups. The adoption of anti-racism legislation, greater implementation of existing legislation, increased compliance with the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and better reporting of racist hate speech were necessary to address the problem effectively. The Committee called on States to implement article 4 of the Convention.

2. The second area related to the worsening situation of migrants, especially refugees and asylum seekers. Denied or limited in their access to basic services and rights, migrants continued to be victims of xenophobia, hatred, stigmatization and negative stereotypes. The Committee regretted the criminalization of irregular migration, which led to the detention of migrants, including women and children. The principle of non-refoulement and legal safeguards were all too often disregarded. The Committee called on States to ensure the rights of all migrants without discrimination, especially migrants fleeing conflicts.

3. The third area related to the systemic racism and structural racial discrimination persisting against African people and Indigenous Peoples, who experienced marginalization and discrimination with respect to their economic, social and cultural rights and their participation in public and political affairs. The Committee called for the implementation of special

measures and its general recommendation No. 36 (2020) on preventing and combating racial profiling by law enforcement officials, in order to end systemic racism and structural discrimination.

4. During its sessions in August 2022, from November to December 2022 and in April 2023, the Committee had examined 19 reports by States parties and provided recommendations on the concerns raised. Late reporting remained a challenge. As at the date of adoption of the annual report, 81 reports had been overdue and 43 reports had been awaiting review owing to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. To facilitate reporting, the Committee had opened the simplified reporting procedure on an opt-in basis. It had also accepted the eight-year predictable cycle under General Assembly resolution 68/268, which would enhance system predictability and the equal treatment of all States parties.

5. The Committee had followed up on the high-priority recommendations in its concluding observations on the reports of nine State parties. The Committee had considered three cases under the individual communications procedure and found violations in two cases. The States concerned had been asked to provide remedies. Only 59 of the 182 State parties to the Convention had recognized the Committee's competence to consider individual communications. Under article 11, State parties could lodge a complaint against another State party. An ad hoc conciliation commission had worked on three cases, of which two had been terminated and one remained active.

6. Under the early warning and urgent action procedure, the Committee had addressed situations in relation to 13 State parties. It had adopted one decision and four statements and had sent 11 letters relating to the land rights of Indigenous Peoples, the excessive use of force by law enforcement against minorities, racist hate speech against migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, and the human rights situation of the Uighur people.

7. The Committee was pursuing the elaboration of a general recommendation No. 37 on racial discrimination and the right to health and was reviewing its rules of procedure and methods of work. Given the financial difficulties, Member States should ensure that the treaty body system was properly funded for it to fulfil its mandate.

8. **Ms. Swan** (Ireland) said that it was regrettable that racism continued to plague countries, including Ireland, and her Government remained strongly committed to addressing that issue. A national action plan against racism had been launched in March 2023 to ensure that the impact of racism was acknowledged and actively

addressed in her country. To support its implementation, her Government had launched the Ireland Against Racism Fund and would soon appoint a national special rapporteur on racial equality and racism. It was also legislating against hate crimes, and a bill to criminalize hate speech was in the final stages of approval. Ireland was developing new equality strategies to address the needs of the Traveller and Roma communities and migrant groups, with the key objectives of combating racism, xenophobia and discrimination. She asked how States could best ensure an intersectional approach in efforts to combat racism, given that racism often intersected with other forms of repression.

9. **Ms. Pereira Gomes** (Brazil) said that the new Government in Brazil was fully committed to combating racism and to implementing the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. It had created a Ministry of Racial Equality, which planned policies on racial issues and participated in relevant international initiatives.

10. **Ms. Greffine** (Representative of the European Union, in its capacity as observer) said that the European Union reiterated its unwavering commitment to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and called on States that had not yet done so to sign or ratify the Convention and thus ensure the enjoyment of human rights for all. During the 2023 meeting of the Chairs of the treaty bodies, the Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination had announced that the Committee would consider accepting the use of the simplified reporting procedure by any State party. Feedback on those discussions would be welcome, particularly in the light of the consultations on the reform of the treaty body system planned for the following month.

11. **Mr. Mezang Akamba** (Cameroon) said that the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination was one of the most important treaty bodies, providing a constant reminder that any doctrine of racial superiority was scientifically false, morally condemnable, socially unjust and dangerous. As its contribution to efforts to combat racial discrimination, Cameroon had nominated a prominent legal expert to monitor implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. The combined twenty-second and twenty-third periodic reports submitted by Cameroon under article 9 of the Convention ([CERD/C/CMR/22-23](#)) had been considered by the Committee the year before. The Committee had welcomed the legislative and policy measures taken by Cameroon, including the adoption of a national plan of action for the development of Indigenous Peoples, a national development strategy for the period 2020–2030 on the promotion of official

languages in Cameroon and the establishment in 2017 of a national commission on the promotion of bilingualism and multiculturalism.

12. **Mr. Kondratev** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation was puzzled by the fact that the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination had not reacted to the large-scale Russophobic campaign launched by Western countries the year before. Russians and Russian-speaking people continued to be denied a wide variety of services, and they were being fired from their jobs, evicted from their apartments and excluded from sporting and cultural activities. Brussels had gone even further by seizing the personal property of Russians when they crossed European Union borders.

13. The Committee continued to ignore the egregious and systematic violations by Latvia and Estonia of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. For example, under the recent amendments to migration laws in Latvia, Russian nationals residing in Latvia were required to pass an exam to prove mastery of the Latvian language to extend their permanent residence permits. In early August 2023, Latvian citizenship and migration authorities had ordered those who had not passed the exam to leave the country. Later that month, the parliament of Estonia had considered another Russophobic, clearly racist proposal to “temporarily” suspend Russian and Belarusian nationals’ right to vote in local elections. Regrettably, the Committee had not issued a statement or launched its early warning and urgent action procedure, thus revealing the politicized, one-sided and biased nature of its work.

14. **Mr. Rizal** (Malaysia) said that his country denounced the repeated hate crimes targeting Muslims around the world, all forms of incitement to hatred and any defence of racism. As a multiracial and multireligious country, Malaysia believed in coexistence between different ethnicities and beliefs and the promotion of acceptance and understanding among diverse communities through moderation, thus contributing to peace. His delegation agreed with the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination that it was important to strengthen national human rights institutions and to enhance cooperation with treaty bodies to ensure the effective implementation of human rights policies. He asked what approaches the Committee had found to be effective in supporting States parties that faced resource constraints and how the Committee prioritized and allocated resources to meet a wide range of capacity needs.

15. **Ms. Almeida Marinho** (Portugal) said that, in April 2023, her country had taken an interministerial delegation to Geneva to engage in an open and

constructive dialogue with the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Portugal called upon all States to redouble efforts to fully implement the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and reiterated its condemnation of and commitment to eliminating all forms of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia. Her Government was implementing its first national plan to combat racism and discrimination, which had been developed together with civil society organizations representing persons of African descent and was aligned with the International Decade for People of African Descent. Portugal was looking forward to hosting a United Nations global conference for anti-racism advocates in 2024.

16. In its annual report, the Committee emphasized its concern for the situation of migrants fleeing their countries to seek refuge abroad, who faced inadequate living conditions and frequent acts of racial discrimination, rejection and racist hate speech. She asked for the Committee's recommendations on how to tackle that serious matter.

17. **Ms. Mimran Rosenberg** (Israel) said that her country was deeply shocked at how the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination had, in its recently issued statement, failed all the victims of the massacre of 7 October 2023 by not actually condemning the Hamas terror organization or acknowledging that the aim of the terrorist attack had been to kill as many Jews as possible. Israel was also deeply alarmed that Hamas – a genocidal group that called for the annihilation of the Jewish people and had carried out the largest atrocity against the Jewish people since the Holocaust – had not been called out for doing so. Furthermore, the Committee had failed to address the global explosion of antisemitic attacks or the fact that protestors were calling for the murder of Jews. There were many more absurd and cynical elements in the statement. She wondered when the Committee would call out Hamas for exploiting the civilians of the Gaza Strip, for seizing humanitarian aid, for firing rockets indiscriminately from within dense urban areas and for using hospitals as its headquarters to plan upcoming attacks.

18. **Mr. Johnson** (United States of America) said that, as a State party to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the United States had been firmly committed to protecting the human rights of all persons, believing that it must lead by example in addressing racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia. In August 2023, the United States had submitted its one-year follow-up report to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD/C/USA/FCO/10-12), in line

with its whole-of-government approach to advancing equity for all. His Government had also made a \$1.5 billion investment to grow and diversify the country's health-care workforce and to bolster equitable health care. His country was committed to addressing the disparities that plagued Black communities, including the unacceptably high rates of maternal mortality and morbidity.

19. In accordance with its early warning and urgent action procedure, the Committee had referred the situation in Xinjiang to the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide in November 2022. However, the Special Adviser had stated that he could not act without action from the Secretary-General. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights had been unable to answer questions about the process in a recent meeting. He asked the Committee to clarify what action was expected to be taken as a result of that referral.

20. **Ms. Ludwig** (Germany) said that, given the situation of the world's countries, the simple truth that human beings were free and equal in dignity and rights was more an aspiration than a reality. Racism, discrimination, xenophobia and hate speech were still on the rise across the world, including in her country. Accordingly, States needed to join forces to combat racism and discrimination wherever they occurred. Germany stood up for anyone who was marginalized and was deeply committed to the work of the Human Rights Council in the field of racism. One form of hate could not be addressed at the expense of another; it was only when all forms were countered together that efforts could be truly effective.

21. **Ms. Zhang Sisi** (China) said that her country was concerned about the systemic and structural racism, the prevalence of Islamophobia and the inequity and burden suffered by minority groups in certain countries, such as the United States and the United Kingdom. China urged countries to implement the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, to amend discriminatory laws, policies and practices, to eradicate the legacy of slavery and colonialism, and to effectively combat all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Always fulfilling its obligations under the Convention, her Government was committed to combating all forms of racism and opposed double standards.

22. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination should carry out its work impartially and objectively, with respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity, and engage in constructive dialogue with States parties. Her Government firmly opposed the

so-called Xinjiang-related decisions adopted by the Committee on the basis of disinformation fabricated by anti-Chinese forces to discredit and vilify China. The Xinjiang issue was not a human rights issue at all, but an issue of countering terrorism and extremism. Her Government had implemented an ethnic policy based on ethnic equality, unity and common prosperity, allowing no place for racial discrimination. Xinjiang enjoyed social stability, economic development and cultural prosperity. People worked in peace and contributed to the development of human rights.

23. Driven by a political agenda to contain China, the United Kingdom and other Western countries were fabricating and spreading lies about Xinjiang, attempting to disparage China and undermine stability. In line with the popular sentiment of the international community, many countries had openly supported the position of China and opposed interference in her country's internal affairs. No matter how the United States, the West and anti-Chinese forces manipulated the Xinjiang issue under the guise of the United Nations, they would not be able to deceive the international community or stop the economic development of China.

24. **Ms. Shepherd** (Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination) said that the Committee was conscious of the fact that a Black woman could also be a migrant or an asylum seeker and thus took an intersectional approach to combating racial discrimination. She called on States to join those efforts.

25. The Committee was currently conducting a campaign to ensure that the remaining 11 States ratified the Convention. During discussions in August 2023, the Committee had unanimously stated that the simplified reporting procedure should be offered to all States parties on an opt-in basis.

26. The Committee included a standard paragraph on the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action in all its concluding observations and urged all States to implement the related programme of activities and recommendations. The Committee understood that the issue of people fleeing conflict zones was related to colonialism. The issue was less about the State to which people were fleeing and more about the State from which they were fleeing and its history. Recommendations should be made about the historical responsibility to be borne for people fleeing.

27. The Committee considered the statement it had issued that day concerning Israel to be balanced. She rejected the accusation of bias; the Committee had expert lawyers and historians who carefully studied the issues in each country before issuing statements. Noting that Israel had yet to attend any of the meetings under

the Committee's conciliation process for the conflict in the Middle East, she urged that country to join the process with a view to engaging in dialogue and finding a solution.

28. The Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide had not proposed a solution following the Committee's referral of the situation in Xinjiang. Further dialogue was scheduled with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on that issue.

29. She had recently engaged in a productive discussion in Berlin on how to advance the elimination of racial discrimination by implementing the International Decade for People of African Descent.

30. She congratulated Malaysia on the accreditation of its national human rights institution with "A" status in accordance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles). The Committee welcomed the commitment of Malaysia to looking into advancing the ratification of the Convention.

31. The Committee had been pleased to engage in a frank and open discussion with the Russian Federation in Geneva earlier that year. Although the Committee differed with the Russian Federation in its assessment of the situation, she wished to assure the Russian delegation that the Committee condemned racial discrimination and acts of violence wherever they occurred, regardless of the State party concerned.

32. The Committee was pleased that it was not alone in investigating and commenting on the situation of the Uighurs. The Committee differed with China in its assessment of the situation. Composed of 18 experts elected by State parties, the Committee was unbiased in its work, calling out racism wherever it saw it. She thanked China for highlighting the need to address the impact of colonialism. In the name of justice, the Committee called on former colonial powers to do what they could to address the impact of colonialism through reparatory justice.

33. **Ms. Ashiwini K.P.** (Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance), introducing her reports ([A/78/302](#) and [A/78/538](#)), said that she had participated in several international conferences and meetings since beginning her mandate in October 2022. In July 2023, she had presented two reports to the Human Rights Council, one on her strategic vision and initial priorities ([A/HRC/53/60](#)) and one on combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contributed to fuelling contemporary forms of

racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (A/HRC/53/62). She had also sent communications to Member States on alleged violations of human rights.

34. She wished to express her sadness and grave concern about the violence and loss of life in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories. She was equally concerned about the tidal wave of hate speech against Jewish, Arab, Muslim and other people, which paved the way for atrocities, including genocide. She had received reports of sharp rises in Islamophobia and antisemitism across the world, as well as racist stereotyping. She called on all Member States to address the alarming rises in hate speech and hate crime and to provide access to remedies for victims.

35. In her report in document A/78/538, she had addressed the worrying global phenomenon of online hate speech. Although the vast amount of information shared online was innocuous, some materials constituted racist hate speech and had, in the most serious cases, real life-and-death consequences. Such cases could amount to incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

36. In her report in document A/78/302, she had recommended that Member States take measures to address different manifestations of hatred, increase the collection of disaggregated data and enhance efforts to implement relevant international legal provisions. She had also included targeted recommendations for other stakeholders, calling on them to facilitate collaboration, collect disaggregated data, provide support to survivors and victims of hate speech and hate crimes, and promote public awareness of multiculturalism and tolerance.

37. **Ms. Novruz** (Azerbaijan), speaking on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, said that the Movement condemned all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Slavery and the slave trade were crimes against humanity, and the legacies of slavery, colonialism, genocide and other forms of servitude had manifested themselves in poverty, underdevelopment, marginalization, social exclusion and economic disparities for the developing world.

38. The Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement commended the progress made on follow-up to the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance and the implementation of the Durban

Declaration and Programme of Action. They urged the Human Rights Council to finalize complementary standards to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

39. All Member States should prioritize educational programmes promoting dialogue and tolerance in order to curb the scourge of hate speech. International cooperation and initiatives were key to promoting mutual understanding.

40. **Ms. Mihail** (Romania) said that her country rejected discrimination, racism, xenophobia and antisemitism and supported a consolidated reaction to hate speech. Recalling that civil society had recommended the use of the definition of antisemitism adopted by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance under the Romanian chairpersonship in 2016, she asked the Special Rapporteur to expand on the possibilities for States and international organizations to use tools such as that definition to advance tolerance and the inclusion agenda in general. She would also be interested to hear positive examples of State policies in support of victims of hate crimes and hate speech, and of campaigns to raise awareness of multiculturalism and tolerance.

41. **Ms. Aquilina** (Malta), speaking as a youth delegate, said that her country continued to implement its anti-racism strategy for the period 2021–2023, which was its first national action plan to combat racism, xenophobia and intolerance, and was aimed at promoting intercultural inclusion and engaging numerous stakeholders.

42. As a cross-cutting phenomenon, hate speech required a comprehensive approach. Racism, xenophobia and intolerance often intersected with other forms of discrimination, including discrimination based on age, disability, socioeconomic status, gender identity and sexual orientation. Her delegation would be interested to learn of specific strategies to effectively counteract the proliferation of multiple and intersecting forms of online and offline discrimination in conflict situations.

43. **Ms. Mudrenko** (Ukraine) said that the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination had recently reported that members of groups protected under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, particularly ethnic Ukrainians, were subjected to severe and grave human rights violations and abuses by the Russian military. Over the past 20 months, the Russian Federation had continued to brutally kill innocent people and destroy their peaceful cities under the pretext of combating neo-Nazism in Ukraine. Russian authorities, including the Permanent Representative of

the Russian Federation to the United Nations, had publicly justified the killing of 59 innocent civilians, including an 8-year-old child, in a missile attack on a café hosting a funeral wake in the Kharkiv region by falsely claiming that the funeral had been for a high-level Ukrainian nationalist and that neo-Nazis had attended the event; that was not true.

44. Russian propaganda had been actively promoting hatred and violence against Ukrainians, with the Kremlin consistently conditioning Russians to view genocide as normal and acceptable, as evidenced by the Russian President's repeated assertion that Ukraine did not exist and the Russian media's broadcasting of such views. On Russian State television, distressing statements had been made, such as advocating the drowning of Ukrainian children and the burning of Ukrainian homes with people inside. Individuals on Russian State television had openly threatened to kill millions of Ukrainians.

45. Her delegation urged the Special Rapporteur to pay particular attention to that issue. Special attention was also warranted for Russian fascism, one of the most dangerous varieties of contemporary neo-Nazism. Since the attempted annexation by Russia of Crimea and over the peninsula's nine-year occupation, the Crimean Tatars of Ukraine had become the most oppressed and persecuted community in occupied Crimea and were labelled as terrorists and extremists by the Russian occupying authorities.

46. **Mr. Kondratev** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation wished to know how it could be that the material that his country had sent on time, in March 2023, at the request of the Special Rapporteur, had not been included in her report on combating glorification of Nazism and neo-Nazism (A/78/302). It should be recalled that Russia was the main sponsor of the yearly General Assembly resolution on combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contributed to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

47. His delegation wished to draw attention once again to the problem of discrimination against athletes and, particularly egregiously, discrimination against athletes with disabilities. That year the Russian Paralympic Committee had sent the Special Rapporteur a letter regarding the grave violation of the rights of Russian athletes with disabilities by the International Paralympic Committee. Even though the Appeals Tribunal of the International Paralympic Committee had rescinded the decision to suspend the membership of the Russian Paralympic Committee, Russian Paralympians were still not allowed to participate in international competitions

and were thus being discriminated against because of their nationality.

48. In July 2023, having received no reply to its first letter, the Russian Paralympic Committee had made another appeal to the Special Rapporteur, urging her not to allow the rights of Russian athletes to be ignored. Although six months had passed since the submission of the first letter, there had been no response. His delegation would be interested to hear what measures had been taken or were planned by the Special Rapporteur in response to the letter sent by the Russian Paralympic Committee and how the Special Rapporteur assessed the actions of the International Paralympic Committee. The Special Rapporteur should pay close attention to that unacceptable situation.

49. **Ms. Arab Bafrani** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that her country categorically rejected racism and racial discrimination. It was deeply regrettable that the Special Rapporteur had taken a selective approach when it came to essential elements that were implicitly codified in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and other international human rights instruments, including systematic and institutionalized racial discrimination, xenophobic acts, foreign occupation and apartheid policies. In view of the increasing trends of apartheid and other forms of racism in some parts of the world, she asked the Special Rapporteur to assess the nexus between online xenophobia, including Islamophobia, and its negative impact on social media platforms, and online racism and hate speech. Second, she asked what steps had been taken by the Special Rapporteur to encourage States to criminalize racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia, particularly Islamophobia, within their national legal frameworks, in a manner consistent with international human rights norms and standards. Lastly, she asked what measures had been taken to draft elements for the United Nations strategy and action plan in that area.

50. **Mr. Smyre** (United States of America) said that his country categorically condemned all forms of systemic racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, violent extremism, antisemitism, anti-Muslim hatred and related intolerance. His Government was concerned about rising hate crimes and incitement of violence against marginalized groups, and the exploitation of the Internet by hate groups. Entrenched systems supporting discrimination and racism needed to be countered with tolerant, cohesive and just societies and dialogue that fostered tolerance and inclusion.

51. Human rights defenders should be able to conduct their work in safe, enabling environments, free from reprisals. His delegation called on Member States to

redouble efforts to counter systemic racism and hatred and to promote tolerance and understanding. He asked the Special Rapporteur what actions Member States could take to build more tolerant, cohesive and just communities online and offline.

52. **Mr. Willekens** (Belgium) said that communities should be based on equality and non-discrimination. His Government agreed that everyone had a role to play in combating online racist hate speech, starting with the ratification and implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. In Belgium, incitement to hatred, discrimination and violence was punishable by law, even when committed online. One of the objectives of the federal anti-racism strategy was to combat cyberhate, which included strengthening prevention measures such as media literacy education and engaging in a structured dialogue with Internet platforms to combat racism.

53. The Special Rapporteur had recommended that States consider a prompt and coordinated international response to online racist hate speech; his delegation wished to know what such a response would entail. He wondered how the international community could ask companies providing digital platforms to take a race-neutral approach, and how such companies could ensure that algorithm biases did not reflect inequality and discrimination.

54. **Ms. Greffine** (Representative of the European Union, in its capacity as observer) said that the European Union remained firmly committed to eliminating all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and stressed the need to address stereotypes, stigmatization, identity labelling and essentialization. Its commitment stood on solid legal ground, namely, on the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Race Equality Directive of 2000, which forbade all direct or indirect discrimination based on racial or ethnic origin. Under the anti-racism action plan for the period 2020–2025, equality had been placed at the centre of policymaking in the European Union. The European Union called for the full and effective implementation of the Convention and urged all Member States to do their utmost to tackle rising hate crime and incitement to violence.

55. **Ms. Wagner** (France) said that her country was firmly opposed to racial discrimination, antisemitism and all forms of intolerance. Its new national plan to combat racism, antisemitism and discrimination in the period 2023–2026 was based on a pragmatic approach aimed at better measuring, combating and penalizing such intolerance, strengthening training and education

and improving support for victims. With corresponding evaluation indicators, the plan's 80 measures included organizing school trips to historical or memorial sites linked to racism or antisemitism. Recognizing the universal rights and dignity of all, France made no distinction between different types of discrimination, all of which were unacceptable.

56. **Mr. Liu Luoge** (China) said that xenophobia and racial supremacy were growing threats. Abuses of freedom of speech to incite hatred were on the rise, as were xenophobia and discrimination against migrants. Such intolerance constituted contemporary forms of racism and Nazism and were the inevitable consequences of doctrines of so-called cultural superiority and the clash of civilizations.

57. China called on the international community to eliminate the legacy of racism and Nazism, to fully implement the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, to promote tolerance, mutual respect and learning between different civilizations, and to take a firm stand against extremist acts that attacked other religions or stoked conflict between civilizations. No form of racism should be justified or allowed to breed and fester. Freedom of speech should never be a pretext for inciting racial discrimination. China stood ready to work with all countries to safeguard their common security, promote development, eliminate racism and racial discrimination and take tangible measures to promote and protect human rights.

58. **Ms. Gebrekidan** (Eritrea) said that the task of bringing together people from diverse cultures was a major challenge for developing and developed nations alike. As a multicultural, multi-ethnic and multilingual country living in harmony, Eritrea was a remarkable example of unity and diversity and hoped to share its experience in the future. She wondered what factors were fuelling the increase in racism and institutional discrimination against migrants of African descent in European countries and what immediate actions could be taken by European countries to effectively address that issue.

59. **Ms. Ijaz** (Pakistan) said that her country was deeply concerned about the global resurgence of hate manifesting as xenophobia, racial and religious intolerance, and discrimination and violence against minorities. Of particular concern were the stigmatization of Muslim communities and individuals and the rise of Islamophobia, which was a new form of racism. The desecration of holy ground in several countries earlier that year was an example of Islamophobic hatred, but the most disturbing manifestation was the anti-Muslim campaign led by the Hindutva-inspired Government in



India with the aim of eradicating all traces of the rich Islamic heritage in India. In his report (A/78/195), the Special Rapporteur on minority issues had noted that there had been a 786 per cent increase in India of hate speech against minorities between 2014 and 2018. There had also been public calls for genocide of Muslims by Hindu priests, which could lead to a genocide of Muslims in India and in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir. She asked what strategies would be pursued by the Special Rapporteur to combat Islamophobic hate speech, including in India and in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

60. **Mr. Valido Martínez** (Cuba) said that eradicating racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia was an ethical imperative for his country, in line with its commitment to social justice and the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. Structural racism did not exist in Cuba, and his Government had adopted laws and policies to combat and eradicate the vestiges of racism, racial prejudice and racial discrimination lingering from centuries of exploitation and colonialism. Cuba continued to move forward in that regard through its national programme for combating racism and racial discrimination, which was aligned with its obligations under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

61. The international community should be concerned about the rising number of victims of police violence in the United States and the disproportionate impact thereof on people of African descent. The cases of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, which were but two examples, should not be forgotten. His delegation hoped that the Special Rapporteur would, during her upcoming visit to the United States, condemn and draw attention to those problems. He asked what recommendations the Special Rapporteur would make to the United States prior to her visit to address those rates of police brutality, which confirmed the existence of structural racism in that country.

62. **Ms. Ashiwini K.P.** (Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance) said that she welcomed the commitment of Member States to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

63. She was deeply concerned about the rise in antisemitism, which had affected various marginalized communities, and had provided related recommendations in her report. Her office had also issued several communications on the issue of discrimination against athletes. Given the broad scope of her mandate, she had

been constantly looking at Islamophobia, which had been one of the most contentious and concerning issues of the recent past. Instances such as the burning of the Qur'an had raised serious concerns across the globe.

64. In terms of best practices, a key recommendation was for Member States to engage with social media platforms. For example, it was important for Member States to demand a social audit if there was a serious gap in the compliance of such platforms with international human rights standards. Another recommendation was to work with civil society groups and other stakeholders to raise awareness with a view to breaking stereotypes, prejudice and historical discrimination.

65. In the recent past, online hate speech had been translated into real-life violence. The chief gap in the relevant legislation and policies of Member States was the lack of disaggregated data and information. Accordingly, she urged Member States to produce disaggregated data, taking into consideration the intersections of gender, race, religion and other layers of marginalization. The intersectional approach provided a broad space to address racism and racial discrimination against people of African descent, Asian, Muslim and Jewish communities, and LGBTQI+ persons.

66. She was seriously concerned about the change in the political climate and its adverse impact on various aspects of socialization and interaction, particularly on social media platforms but also in real life. Member States were urged to take the issue extremely seriously and to ensure coordination between the State and public corporations, particularly those hosting social platforms, with a view to taking an approach that was aligned with international human rights standards.

67. **Ms. Hassan** (Chair-Rapporteur of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Elaboration of Complementary Standards to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination), introducing the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on its thirteenth session (A/HRC/54/65), said that, in the year since the previous report, the Ad Hoc Committee had made substantive progress on elaborating a draft additional protocol to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination criminalizing acts of a racist and xenophobic nature. The Committee had continued to focus its efforts on addressing the spread of hate speech, racial cybercrime and all forms of discrimination based on religion or belief, and on preventive measures to combat racist and xenophobic discrimination.

68. In the light of the summary of issues and possible elements discussed pertaining to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 73/262 and Human Rights

Council resolution 34/36 on “the commencement of the negotiations on the draft additional protocol to the Convention criminalizing acts of a racist and xenophobic nature”, adopted by the Ad Hoc Committee at its tenth session, and in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 51/32, legal experts had been retained to provide inputs and guidance for the preparation of a document of the Chair-Rapporteur at the thirteenth session. Their work had been informed by the request made by the Ad Hoc Committee at its twelfth session for further consideration of the elements requiring legal definition in order to criminalize racist and xenophobic acts; of the structure and scope of a legal document criminalizing such acts; and of the essential terms to be defined.

69. At its thirteenth session, the Ad Hoc Committee had discussed procedural aspects of the additional protocol in the context of public international law and considered the draft document prepared by the Chair-Rapporteur pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 51/32. A consensus had been reached for the Chair-Rapporteur to maintain engagement with legal experts on a range of issues in anticipation of the fourteenth session, scheduled for 2024.

70. On 6 October 2023, the Chair-Rapporteur had presented the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on its thirteenth session to the Human Rights Council at its fifty-fourth session. Subsequently, the Council had adopted resolution 54/27, in which it had requested continued engagement with legal experts to guide the preparation of the Chair’s document.

71. On the basis of the thirteenth session, the Ad Hoc Committee was beginning substantive consideration of the possible substance of the complementary standards, guided by its mandate from the General Assembly and Human Rights Council and the input of the legal experts. The work of the Ad Hoc Committee entailed not just agreeing on new standards but also strengthening protection against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and should complement rather than weaken existing provisions of the Convention. The Chair-Rapporteur would continue to engage with legal experts on the preparation of a Chair’s document prior to the fourteenth session.

72. The substantive deliberations in the Ad Hoc Committee were helping the international community to understand and conceptualize the issues more clearly and to bridge differences. With much still to do, the necessary political will and constructive engagement must be demonstrated to advance the implementation the Ad Hoc Committee’s mandate. Summoning the political will to seriously combat racism, racial

discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance was a test of the credibility of the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly.

73. **Mr. Kondratev** (Russian Federation) said that the increase in displays of racism and related intolerance was regrettable. People of African descent and national, ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities faced daily discrimination and intolerance, which showed the systemic nature of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Ideologies of racial and national superiority formed the basis of State policies in some countries, resulting in the application of discriminatory laws and oppressive law enforcement practices against certain groups of the population and showing that some States parties to the International Convention on Eliminating All Forms of Racial Discrimination were disregarding their obligations thereunder. Strengthening the international legal regime to combat contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance had become more relevant than ever.

74. **Ms. Greffine** (Representative of the European Union, in its capacity as observer) said that, despite engaging in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee, the European Union disagreed with the notion that the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination contained substantive or procedural gaps and called for its full implementation, the lack of which constituted the only gap.

75. Significant efforts had been made in recent years to combat hate speech and hate crime in the European Union, where public incitement to violence or hatred based on race, colour, religion, descent or national or ethnic origin was prohibited.

76. Given the lack of agreement or common understanding on core questions in the Ad Hoc Committee, the European Union believed it premature for the Ad Hoc Committee to start formal negotiations on the draft additional protocol. Further clarity was needed first, and the international community must tread carefully when developing new norms.

77. **Ms. Arab Bafrani** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the negative legacy of neocolonialism and the ongoing apartheid policies, stereotyping, violence, xenophobia and intolerance against Africans and people of African descent were cause for deep concern. As a State party to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, her country valued the work of the Ad Hoc Committee and stressed the need to find the political will to rectify the gaps in the Convention, address racism, racial

discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and provide adequate remedies to victims.

78. The Islamic Republic of Iran was concerned by the fact that the Ad Hoc Committee did not consider discrimination based on religion to be an independent element, despite the rise of Islamophobia and the desecration of the Qur'an in parts of the world, and that the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action was not being fully implemented. As the complementary document to the Convention, the Durban Declaration must be considered when drafting an additional protocol.

79. To assist the Chair-Rapporteur in preparing the initial draft of the additional protocol to the Convention, the Islamic Republic of Iran proposed the establishment of an expert mechanism comprising five experts from different geographical groups.

80. **Ms. Hassan** (Chair-Rapporteur of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Elaboration of Complementary Standards) said that she would continue to engage with all delegations, civil society representatives and legal experts in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution [54/27](#). She would count on the Third Committee members to uphold the decisions of the majority at the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly in order to address the global increase in racial discrimination and racism.

81. The insights of the Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the Chairs of other committees dealing with the same issue made it clear that the political stalling of collectively agreed processes would be problematic. She counted on all delegations to work towards finding a negotiated consensus in 2024.

82. **The Chair** invited the Committee to engage in a general discussion on the items.

83. **Mr. Rizal** (Malaysia) said that, decades after the adoption of the declarations and programmes of action in Durban and Vienna, racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and Islamophobia had risen globally under the guise of freedom of opinion and expression. In the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Israel was intensifying apartheid practices, driven by its sense of racial and ideological superiority and a clear manifestation of deep-seated hatred. The rise in Islamophobia and the blatant apartheid in the Occupied Palestinian Territory were the result of impunity and the failure of States to stop human rights violations despite commitments under the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.

84. As a multiracial and multireligious country, Malaysia believed in peaceful coexistence and the promotion of empathy through moderation. It had made efforts to unify its diverse ethnicities while upholding their respective identities. Malaysia was deeply concerned about the rise in hate crimes and hate speech based on faith or ethnicity and supported global efforts against Islamophobia and related intolerance.

85. **Ms. Zalabata Torres** (Colombia) said that her country was a multi-ethnic and multicultural nation in which diversity was not only a legally protected asset but also an essential hallmark of the population. With equality guaranteed under the Constitution, the Government of Colombia had committed to measures aimed at addressing the structural causes of inequalities, including racial discrimination and racism, through education, social dialogue and the achievement of total peace.

86. In 2023, the Ministry of Equality and Equity had been founded to defend individuals under special constitutional protection and those from vulnerable and historically marginalized groups. It would also coordinate public policy for eradicating racism and racial discrimination and defending the rights of Black, Afro-Colombian, Raizal, Palenquero, Indigenous and Rrom peoples and communities.

87. On 12 October 2023, the Vice-President of Colombia, Francia Márquez, had set up the National Intersectoral Commission for Historical Reparation to implement measures aimed at historical reparation to address the impacts of racism, racial discrimination and colonialism on ethnic peoples. In addition, her Government had proposed the creation of a non-discrimination seal to recognize strategies and practices for reducing discrimination.

88. **Mr. Albadr** (Saudi Arabia) said that the Israeli war machine was targeting civilian infrastructure and killing and injuring thousands of innocent Palestinians. The complacency of the international community would not bring about security and stability. The Palestinian cause would remain the foremost concern of Saudi Arabia until the Palestinian people achieved their legitimate rights, including the right to self-determination and to live in peace and security in their independent State with Jerusalem as its capital, in line with the Security Council resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative. His Government called for the cessation of military operations, the lifting of the siege on Gaza, the opening of safe humanitarian corridors and compliance with international humanitarian law.

89. Saudi Arabia condemned repeated incidents around the world of Qur'an-burning. Such unacceptable

acts promoted exclusion, hate and racism and undermined international efforts to encourage tolerance, moderation, counter-extremism efforts and mutual respect among nations. Islamic sharia guaranteed equality and prohibited racism and injustice, and non-Muslim residents were guaranteed freedom of religious practice.

90. The Saudi Vision 2030 included measures to draw people of all ethnicities, religions and cultures to the country for investment, work, education and tourism. His Government prohibited racist organizations, the distribution or funding of supremacist theories and racial discrimination. The King Abdulaziz Centre for National Dialogue held meetings to increase awareness of human rights, counter extremism and hate and combat discrimination.

91. **Ms. Ahangari** (Azerbaijan) said that the equality of all citizens of Azerbaijan was guaranteed by law, and racial discrimination was prohibited under the Constitution. Her Government had introduced stricter penalties for the incitement of ethnic, racial, social or religious hatred and pursued accountability for violations of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

92. Hate propaganda, policies fostering religious and racial dissension, the building of mono-ethnic societies, the advocating of ideas of ethnic supremacy and incompatibility, the weaponization of the past and the promotion of fabricated historical narratives fuelled intolerance, destabilized societies and undermined peaceful coexistence. Impunity for violations of international law impeded peace, justice and reconciliation.

93. Human rights must not be interpreted to permit activities that contravened international law, which often caused conflict. The situation relating to the territory in Azerbaijan, which had been mentioned by Liechtenstein at the previous meeting (see [A/C.3/78/SR.40](#)), had been qualified in General Assembly and Security Council resolutions as an illegal use of force against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. The delegation of Liechtenstein should study those resolutions and the letters from Azerbaijan on the matter.

94. **Ms. Tokarska** (Ukraine) said that her country had launched a national strategy in March 2021 to advance human rights and freedoms, subsequently adopting a three-year action plan for its implementation.

95. Despite global progress, instances of racism and racial discrimination remained widespread, including crimes against humanity, persecution, violence and

devastating conflicts. An alarming example was the use by the Russian Federation of the pretext of fighting neo-Nazism to justify its unprovoked invasion of Ukraine. In 2022, the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance had highlighted the blatant instrumentalization by the Russian Federation of the serious human rights concerns raised by neo-Nazi mobilizations.

96. For 20 months, the Russian Federation had been violating international humanitarian law and human rights law in Ukraine. The Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations had justified the killing of civilians, including a child, in an incident in the Kharkiv region by falsely alleging the presence of neo-Nazi accomplices. The Russian Federation had been promoting hatred and violence against Ukrainians and conditioning Russians to view genocide as acceptable, repeatedly asserting that Ukraine did not exist. There was an urgent need to address Russian fascism.

97. The Russian Federation continued its discrimination and repression against the Crimean Tatars and ethnic Ukrainians in temporarily occupied Crimea in breach of an order of the International Court of Justice, which highlighted the urgent need to evaluate the efficiency of existing mechanisms for eliminating racism in order to prevent their further manipulation and misuse.

98. **Ms. Asaju** (Nigeria) said that racism and xenophobia were affronts to the principle of dignity and equality upon which the United Nations had been founded. Any doctrine of racial superiority was false, morally repugnant, socially unjust and dangerous. There was no justification for racial discrimination. Nigeria had stood firm against racial discrimination through its foreign policy since independence, incurring great human and financial sacrifices in fighting colonialism, apartheid, minority rule and other forms of domination. Despite xenophobic attacks against Nigerians, the country had prioritized dialogue and diplomacy over confrontation and sanctions to solve world challenges.

99. With one year remaining in the International Decade of the People of African Descent, it was necessary to assess the progress made towards achieving its objectives. As Nigeria could not claim to be developed while Africans around the world suffered from hunger, deprivation and discrimination, it called upon the international community to combat discrimination against Africans and people of African descent, in particular migrants, whose plight was reminiscent of the horror of slavery. Nigeria reiterated

its support for the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

100. **Mr. Yaseen** (Iraq) said that hate speech and discrimination based on race or religion had led to new forms of racism, including Islamophobia and violations of the rights of Muslims in some States. Iraq called for adherence to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, urging States to take measures to combat racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance.

101. On 24 October 2023, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 had stated that the Israeli occupation forces were killing, maiming and detaining hundreds of Palestinian children every year and that Israel described children as human shields or terrorists to justify violence against them and their families. Her statement clearly reflected the suffering of and discrimination against the Palestinian people, with whom the international community must stand.

102. The occupying Power needed to respect international law, relevant international resolutions and the articles of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. It must withdraw from all occupied territories, including Jerusalem, and the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council should give proper attention to the plight of the Palestinian people. The item must remain under consideration in order to expose the racist separation policies followed by the occupying forces against the Palestinian people.

103. **Ms. Cruz Morataya** (Guatemala) said that Guatemala was a multilingual, pluricultural, and multi-ethnic country that legally recognized the existence of the Mestizo, Garífuna, Xinka, Maya and Afrodescendent peoples. Since 2014, her Government had been implementing a public policy for eliminating racism and racial discrimination that incorporated various international instruments, including the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

104. At the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held in Durban, South Africa, 22 years earlier, it had been recognized that racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia violated the rights of historical victims of slavery and colonialism. Although much progress had been made in combating racism and discrimination, much work remained to recognize, promote and fully respect the rights of people of African descent. The draft declaration on the human rights of people of African

descent currently being discussed in Geneva was a necessary step to overcome the legacies of slavery, colonialism and discrimination.

105. Guatemala would continue to promote the rights of people of African descent and hoped to contribute further as a member of the Human Rights Council, having presented its candidacy for the period 2025–2027.

106. **Ms. Sonkar** (India) said that her country had long been home to a vast diversity of ethnicities and races. In 1946, India had been the first country to denounce apartheid at the United Nations. The Constitution of India prohibited discrimination on any grounds, including race, and its provisions were embodied in legal frameworks safeguarded by an independent judiciary, human rights institutions, civil society and free media.

107. Member States must intensify efforts to combat racial hatred and discrimination while safeguarding the freedom of speech and expression, including through partnerships with the private sector and civil society. As a former colony, India had always been at the forefront in supporting the right of peoples to self-determination, which clearly referred to peoples of Non-Self-Governing and Trust Territories in the United Nations context.

108. India had jointly sponsored the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, adopted by the General Assembly in 1960, and had been elected the first Chair of the Special Ad Hoc Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration in 1962. With 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories at various stages of decolonization, efforts must be stepped up to conclude that drawn-out process.

109. **Ms. Mihail** (Romania) said that her Government had transposed international principles aimed at combating racism into national law and had developed strategies and policies targeting racism, xenophobia, antisemitism and hate speech, including the strategy for the social inclusion of Romanian Roma citizens for the period 2021–2027 and the national strategy for preventing and combating antisemitism, xenophobia, radicalization and hate speech for the period 2021–2023.

110. As legislative frameworks alone were not sufficient, the Government of Romania was working on practical measures in education, media, administration, institution-building and participation in public and political life. The protection of human rights and the fight against discrimination were addressed in continuous training sessions for judges and prosecutors and in the training of police officers.

111. It was unfortunate that, 75 years after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the need

to combat discrimination, racism, xenophobia and antisemitism remained urgent. All people should take a stand every day to ensure the equal enjoyment of human rights by everyone.

112. **Ms. Al Dhanhani** (United Arab Emirates) said that States' legislative and legal systems must be enhanced to criminalize hate speech and blasphemy and bridge policy gaps. Under the Constitution of the United Arab Emirates, all individuals were equal before the law. Moreover, a law had been passed in 2015 to combat discrimination against individuals or groups based on belief, race, colour or gender. Her country was proud to be home to more than 200 nationalities living in a safe and stable environment.

113. Extremism, discrimination and hate speech contributed to the spread, aggravation and repetition of conflicts, as affirmed in Security Council resolution [2686 \(2023\)](#) on tolerance and international peace and security, adopted in June 2023 on the initiative of the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom. The resolution outlined steps for combating racism and promoting tolerance, including the monitoring of hate speech and racism by United Nations peacekeeping troops and special political missions.

114. The spread of misinformation, disinformation, hate speech and incitement to violence after the outbreak of war in Gaza had shown the need for strengthened intercommunal dialogue, the emphasizing of moderate voices that promoted peace, and the rejection of hatred and extremism. Initiatives and institutions must be established to combat hate speech, racism and discrimination. The declaration of 4 February as International Day of Human Fraternity by the General Assembly was an important step towards fostering understanding between cultures and peoples and highlighting the role of education in eliminating discrimination.

115. Social media and media institutions were a double-edged sword, as they helped to spread human values but could also be used to disseminate hatred and anger.

116. **Ms. Almunaifi** (Kuwait) said that the world was witnessing a humanitarian catastrophe due to the continued aggression by the Israeli occupation authorities that was depriving the Palestinian people of their human rights and basic freedoms. It was difficult to celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights given the systemic hate speech of the Israeli authorities that dehumanized the Palestinian people.

117. Kuwait called for support for the legitimate rights of Palestinians and a settlement based on the two-State

solution, United Nations resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative, which guaranteed the Palestinian people their right to an independent State based on the 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as its capital.

118. Islamophobia and the association of terrorism with Islam fuelled hostility between peoples. Kuwait was gravely concerned over the marked increase in religious hatred, including the repeated desecration of the Qur'an under the pretext of the right of freedom of expression, which needed to be linked to responsibility and respect for the rights of others.

119. Kuwait condemned all disinformation and policies linking Islam to terrorism and called upon the international community to combat such campaigns and prevent insults against prophets and the monotheistic religions.

*Statements made in exercise of the right of reply*

120. **Ms. Sonkar** (India) said that Pakistan habitually misused international forums to spread baseless propaganda against India, in particular regarding the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, which was an integral part of India. Matters related to Jammu and Kashmir were therefore purely internal.

121. India was committed to the development of Jammu and Kashmir. Under the Prime Minister's Development Package of 2015, 53 projects in the territory had been fully or almost completed with an investment of \$7.5 billion. The budget for the territory had increased from almost \$10 billion in 2019/20 to more than \$14 billion in 2023/24. All households in Jammu and Kashmir were electrified. In the health sector, a range of educational institutions were being founded, with \$100 million allocated to the creation of health-care infrastructure. In education, two institutes in Jammu for technology and management, respectively, were now operational, and the number of degree and engineering colleges had increased by 50 per cent, with many more being established. All central laws, including those safeguarding the rights of women, children and the underprivileged, had been extended to the territory.

122. The previous day, Pakistani rangers had opened fire along the international border of Jammu and Kashmir, injuring two security personnel and one civilian. It was the second ceasefire violation in less than 10 days and indicative of the fostering of terrorism against India by Pakistan, which was home to the largest number of internationally proscribed and sanctioned terrorist entities and individuals in the world. India called upon Pakistan to stop cross-border terrorism so that residents of Jammu and Kashmir could exercise their right to life and liberty.

123. **Mr. Murphy** (United States of America) said that the repeated implication by China that the United States was concealing its history and domestic injustice was simply inaccurate. The United States had continually welcomed the opportunity to discuss concerns related to racism, so it was perplexing to hear that accusation from a country that had not done so itself.

124. The President of the United States had issued executive orders aimed at reducing systemic racism and poverty. The country's civil society and free press were allowed to highlight past misdeeds and ongoing challenges, including those to which the Chinese delegation repeatedly called attention, yet China did not permit civil society to speak freely or advocate positions that it considered adverse to State interests.

125. The United States had issued a standing invitation to all thematic special procedure mandate holders and received visits from United Nations special rapporteurs. If the people of Xinjiang, Tibet and Hong Kong truly enjoyed the protection of all human rights, it would be hoped that China would transparently welcome visits by special procedure mandate holders, but it did not extend such invitations.

126. China used its time in the Third Committee to distract from its documented crimes against humanity and deny the human rights abuses that it was committing against its own people. The United States urged China to embrace self-reflection, stop denying its own human rights problems and intimidating Member States that raised concerns about its human rights practices, and address the concerns and recommendations of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, special procedure mandate holders, the Ad Hoc Committee on the Elaboration of Complementary Standards and others.

127. **Ms. Qureshi** (Pakistan) said that lies and obfuscation could not change the history and realities on the ground. Jammu and Kashmir was a disputed territory and not an integral part of India, a fact attested to in multiple Security Council resolutions. In its resolution [47 \(1948\)](#), the Council had clearly stated that the question of the accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India or Pakistan should be decided through the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite. India had accepted that decision and was bound to comply with it in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

128. India must be held accountable for flouting international law. Since 5 August 2019, India had been performing demographic engineering to disempower the Muslim majority of the occupied territory, with Kashmiris subjected to a reign of terror by the largest

occupation force in history. India used the myth of terrorism to divert attention from its own State-sponsored terrorism against Kashmiris, minorities in India and its neighbours.

129. In a recent report, Amnesty International had highlighted the use by India of assessment reports of the Financial Action Task Force to supplement its counter-terrorism and money-laundering laws, many of which were routinely used to target civil society organizations and human rights defenders. No minorities were safe in India as a result of its pursuit of Hindutva fascism, with minorities subjected to persecution, hate speech, dehumanizing treatment, discriminatory citizenship laws, disinformation campaigns and the denial of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Rather than misleading the international community, India should allow the Kashmiris to exercise their right to self-determination in accordance with the Security Council resolutions.

130. **Mr. Mao Yizong** (China) said that the United States was misusing the Third Committee to make unfounded accusations against his country with ulterior political motives, including to undermine development in China. If countries such as the United States truly cared about the rights of Muslims in Xinjiang, they should spare no effort in promoting a ceasefire in Gaza and opening humanitarian corridors. The Gaza conflict exposed the hypocrisy and double standards of those countries.

131. China had consistently supported constructive dialogue to protect the rights of all, uphold multilateralism, forge consensus and bridge differences, and it was cooperating with international human rights mechanisms. The work of the Third Committee should be based on objectivity, non-selectivity, non-politicization, impartiality, respect for sovereignty and non-interference.

132. His delegation resolutely opposed the use of the so-called issues of Xinjiang, Tibet and Hong Kong at the United Nations to smear and attack China and coerce nations into choosing sides. Most countries supported the righteous position of China.

*The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.*