



**International Convention on
the Elimination of All Forms
of Racial Discrimination**

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115th session

Summary record of the 3138th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Tuesday, 22 April 2025, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Balcerzak

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Opening of the session

1. **The Chair** declared open the 115th session of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.
2. **Mr. Korkeakivi** (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)) said that, at the fifty-eighth session of the Human Rights Council, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights had observed that the international system was undergoing a tectonic shift and the human rights edifice that had been built up over decades was under unprecedented strain. An all-out effort was required to ensure that human rights and the rule of law remained foundational to communities, societies and international relations. Furthermore, in March 2025, the Secretary-General had warned that the poison of racism – a legacy of historic enslavement, colonialism and discrimination – continued to infect the world, corrupting communities, blocking opportunities and eroding dignity, equality and justice. In that context, the Convention was a beacon of hope to guide the international community in dark times.
3. In 2025, the Committee commemorated the sixtieth anniversary of the Convention, which presented an opportunity to find ways to generate greater political will to fight racial discrimination. On the occasion of International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, various events had been held, including at the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council, with a focus on the sixtieth anniversary. For its part, OHCHR had launched a special web page and planned to hold a series of activities to support the Committee during its anniversary campaign.
4. With regard to other recent developments within the United Nations, the High Commissioner had issued his annual report on the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities ([A/HRC/58/34](#)), which drew heavily on the Committee's assessment of the status of minority rights in countries under review. The report also acknowledged the Committee's contribution to advancing the adoption of anti-discrimination legislation worldwide.
5. In December 2024, under the auspices of the United Nations network on racial discrimination and protection of minorities, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, the United Nations Population Fund and OHCHR had organized a community of practice to discuss how countries could use the Committee's general recommendation No. 37 on racial discrimination in the enjoyment of the right to health. The network had also recently held meetings at which other United Nations entities had been invited to contribute to activities, publications and initiatives, with the aim of stimulating discussion of ways to address structural and emerging challenges in preventing and combating racial discrimination.
6. In its 2024 study of constitutions, laws, legislation, policies, judicial decisions and other mechanisms through which States had taken measures to achieve the ends of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples ([A/HRC/57/62](#)), the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples had emphasized the relevance of the Committee's jurisprudence in protecting the political and cultural rights of Indigenous Peoples. The study highlighted how the Committee's work reinforced the principles of the Declaration and strengthened the role of international treaty bodies in holding States accountable for respecting the collective rights of Indigenous Peoples.
7. In December 2024, the General Assembly had proclaimed the Second International Decade for People of African Descent (2025–2034) with the theme of "People of African descent: recognition, justice and development". OHCHR continued to hold consultations to inform the implementation of the agenda towards transformative change for racial justice and equality. It had convened regional consultations with civil society activists and practitioners on dismantling systemic racism and addressing legacies of the past through reparatory justice, which would inform the High Commissioner's next report on racial justice and equality. Reparatory justice had also been the focus of the December 2024 session of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent, which would present its report to the Human

Rights Council in September 2025. The Working Group had organized a panel to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the Convention.

8. Also in December 2024, the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent had held its first regional consultation on the draft declaration on the promotion and full respect of human rights of people of African descent. The fourth session of the Permanent Forum had been held in April 2025 on the theme of “Africa and people of African descent: united for reparatory justice in the age of artificial intelligence”. In May 2025, the International Independent Expert Mechanism to Advance Racial Justice and Equality in Law Enforcement would hold its fourth session, in Geneva, on the topic of systemic racism against Africans and people of African descent in the criminal justice system, with a view to preparing a thematic report.

9. In March 2025, OHCHR had organized a regional consultation for Europe on a world of sport free from racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. A second regional consultation would subsequently take place in Mexico, with a focus on sport in Latin America. The outcomes of the consultations would inform the High Commissioner’s report, to be presented to the Human Rights Council in September 2025.

10. At its fifteenth session, the Ad Hoc Committee of the Human Rights Council on the Elaboration of Complementary Standards to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination would continue to work on the draft additional protocol to the Convention criminalizing acts of a racist and xenophobic nature. The session would focus on concrete elements of draft provisions related to the prohibition and criminalization of such acts, procedural guarantees for indicted persons and the protection of victims.

11. In respect of the challenges facing the treaty body system, chronic resource constraints had been compounded by the ongoing liquidity crisis, which hampered the planning and implementation of the Committee’s work. OHCHR was striving to ensure that the treaty bodies could implement their mandates, including by highlighting the direct impact that resource limitations had on human rights protection. Nevertheless, the difficult liquidity situation looked set to continue, and it was uncertain that the treaty bodies would be able to hold their 2025 sessions as planned.

12. The treaty body strengthening process had reached a key moment with the recent adoption by the General Assembly of its biennial resolution on the human rights treaty body system, in which the treaty bodies and OHCHR were invited to continue to work to increase coordination and predictability in the reporting process with the aim of achieving a clear and regularized schedule for reporting, and to increase their efforts to further the use of digital technologies. The resolution did not, however, endorse other proposals made by the Chairs of the human rights treaty bodies, such as the proposal for an eight-year predictable review cycle.

13. To mark Human Rights Day in 2024, the Geneva Human Rights Platform, in cooperation with OHCHR and the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, had organized an informal meeting of the Chairs of the treaty bodies and the Committees’ focal points on working methods in order to explore developments in the treaty body system and identify ways to improve the harmonization of procedures. The Chairs and focal points had had the opportunity to meet with Member States and other stakeholders, and had also interacted with the Coordination Committee of Special Procedures. OHCHR would work with the Chairs and focal points to ensure continued coordination on working methods in the lead-up to the forthcoming meeting of the Chairs, due to be held in Geneva in June 2025.

14. **Mr. Amir** said that, in dark times, the Committee had a particular duty to raise awareness of what was happening in the world. He was deeply troubled by the continued killings in the State of Palestine and wondered what the international community could do to bring an end to such crimes.

15. **Mr. Korkeakivi** (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) said that good communication and transparency would be needed in negotiating the difficulties currently facing the treaty bodies. OHCHR recognized that the Committee and

the other treaty bodies played a critical role in underpinning a strong human rights architecture.

Adoption of the agenda

16. The agenda was adopted.

The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.