

Research Report:

Assembly: Human Rights Council

Topic: The Question of Protection of Racial Minorities

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Introduction

Racial discrimination, xenophobia and general discriminative intolerance have existed in all societies throughout our history. In fact, protecting the rights of minority groups has been the principal goal of the United Nations since its establishment. The act of racial discrimination happens globally, regardless of the country's level of development. As a result, minority discrimination leads to exclusion from society, which results in poverty, as well as putting a limit on opportunities to share their specific culture, language, and identity; these are the most common problems worldwide. It is for these reasons that the protection of minority groups is vital and requires discussion.

Definition of Key Terms

Minorities

A group of individuals that are different from the majority group of the society.

Racial

Physical and biological traits.

Xenophobia

The feeling of hatred toward people from a different country, or race.

Background Information

The seed to racial minorities discrimination started in the 13th century Henry III of England declared the Edict of Badge that required all Jews to wear marking badges and increasing their tax. Later on, during the Renaissance era, many indigenous people in Africa were captured and sold as slaves to the thirteen North American Colonies. The majority of the slaves were the black African people. During the late seventeenth century, laws were passed that forbid marriage between whites and blacks in English North America. In the twentieth century, there were separation laws restricting the rights to vote for African-Americans. Racism became worse when Adolf Hitler was in power. Approximately six million people were killed due to their race, mainly the Jews. In 1948, laws were passed in the USA banning all marriage and sexual relations between different races group, and was strictly segregating residential sight for different groups. Today racism continues to be one of world's major problems despite countless international actions against it. Consequently, this is a major issue that needs discussion and action in order to reduce the act of discriminating upon people regarding their race.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

The OHCHR works to protect and promote human rights, and elaborate the United Nations peacekeeping mission in the world.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

UNESCO works to correlate different nations and society, so that citizens can have access to quality education, basic human rights, scientific advancement, exchanging culture, and communication.

The Council of Europe

The Council of Europe works as a lead organization within countries in promoting and protecting human rights. The Council of Europe has a total of 47 member of states, 28 of which are members of the European Union.

United States of America

In 1863, there was a civil war in the United State of America, also known as “The War Between the States” that was fought between the United States of America and the Confederate States of America. The Confederate States of America fought to preserve slavery while the United States of America believed otherwise. On January 1, 1863 as the nation's approached the third year of the civil war, president Abraham Lincoln created the Emancipation Proclamation, declaring that all persons that had been held as a slave subsequently shall be freed. Although, even after the war there was, and still is extreme racial conflict.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of Event
January 1863	President Abraham Lincoln created the Emancipation Proclamation.
December 1965	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD).
December 1992	Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities seeks to reinforce the protection of minorities group.
1978, 1983, 2001 and 2009	World Conference Against Racism (WCAR) allows members to discuss and plan actions toward the issue of the protecting and promoting minority rights, and further ensure that any member of a minority group will be able to participate in a non-discriminatory society.
21 March annually	International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is a program for combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance.

Relevant UN Treaties and Events

- International Convention on the Elimination of All Form of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)
- The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
- World Conference Against Racism (WCAR)
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
- Treaty of the European Union
- Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

Previous Attempts to solve the issue

In December 1992, the United Nations had adopted a resolution on “Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities” that addresses the importance of minority groups and their rights. The resolution addresses the rights that minorities are entitled to, as well as their rights to freely practice their culture, and the rights to freedom of speech.

The World Conference Against Racism (WCAR) had already been held four times, in the years of 1978, 1983, 2001 and 2009. The event was hosted in the hopes of discussing and planning actions in combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance. Furthermore, the program was held to discuss within the member of states to present the indigenous people with an unique opportunity to consider having the minority people’s participation in political, economic, and cultural action in the societies.

Possible Solutions

One of the possible solutions is that governments should be strengthening the interpretation and protection of cultures and religions of minority groups. In addition, an individual that belongs to any minority group should be treated with respect in all cases, as well as providing them with the same opportunities as the other citizens. The government is a core to a country, therefore governments should take action in order to protect the minorities that live along side the majority.

All human beings are entitled to freedom of speech and equal rights. This must be required as part of the education system because it is important to combat prejudice at a young age. Governments need to celebrate the diversity of their people by acknowledging different holidays for all the citizens.

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