Forum: Social Humanitarian and Cultural Committee

Issue: Eliminating racial discrimination, xenophobia and related

intolerances

Student Officer: George Kantzis

Position: Co-Chair

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear Delegates,

My name is George Kantzis, I am 16 years old and I attend the 10th Grade in the German School of Athens. I must admit that it is my honor to serve as the Co-Chair of the Social Humanitarian and Cultural Committee in the 6th session of the Platon School Model United Nations. I have participated both in the fourth and in the fifth PSMUN and I am really grateful that I was given the chance to attend this year's conference as a chair. Overall, I have participated in 10 MUN conferences and I can assure you that Model United Nations is a whole world by itself. MUN is undoubtedly an important activity with immense values and therefore, I am proud that it is included in my aspirations.

This year's agenda of the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee provides delegates with the chance to discuss and propose measures, so as to combat serious problems, such as slum dwellers, migrants and internally displaced persons and minorities suffering from discrimination and xenophobic beliefs. As a chair, it is my responsibility to guide you through your research and help you in order to submit effective resolutions tackling the problem of discrimination and xenophobia in its roots. However, this study guide is not the only source on which you should base your research. Racial discrimination and xenophobia is a rather huge topic and consequently it demands serious devotion. Therefore, should you come up with any questions relating to this issue, I strongly urge you to contact me in my email address georgekantzis@gmail.com.

I am really looking forward to meeting you all in the 6th PSMUN.

Best Regards,

George Kantzis

INTRODUCING TOPIC

"Irrespective of its sources, racism is racism. Ignorance is no excuse. Insecurity is not justification...racism in all its forms should be uncompromisingly condemned."

Michael Dodson, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner,
 quoted in Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, Fourth Report, 1996

Racial Discrimination, xenophobia and other related intolerances are all common phenomena observed in each and every society of the twenty-first century. To begin with, discrimination on the grounds of race and ethnicity is a result of innumerable factors affecting people's attitudes and more specifically values regarding social groups and minorities.



Racial discrimination can be easily defined as the notion that people of the same race are more powerful than other people of other races and thus they express this superiority via bias-motivated acts that can afflict the others not only psychologically but also physically. Furthermore, xenophobia is tightly correlated to racial discrimination, since xenophobic behaviors are always the key-element that leads to racism. Such conducts are usually caused from the fear of the unfamiliar or the concept that difference between people is peculiar and unacceptable.



Additionally, there are several schemes to manifest the above-mentioned intolerances most of which harm people in different ways. First of all, racial discrimination can cause the marginalization of minority races. Such was the example of Singapore, where Indian minorities were discriminated and excluded from society, hence having to live under unbearable circumstances. Secondly, due to the increased emigrational waves observed since the beginning of the twenty-first century, immigrants and refugees are highly vulnerable to discrimination and xenophobic acts and therefore, they have habitually

restricted access to asylum and humanitarian assistance. This situation could be exemplified through the fact that millions of immigrants from the Middle East attempted to flee to Europe, but only a few managed to get accepted from European Governments, such as Germany and France. Moreover, xenophobia and discrimination regarding races may include damage of properties, verbal or physical assault or even sexual abuse of people belonging to minorities. Last but not least, as

in the case of the Second World War, xenophobia and racist beliefs may provoke actions, such as genocide of minorities and ethnic cleansing.

To conclude, racial discrimination and xenophobia are severe occurrences that have grave impacts on the whole humanity. Although the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) aim at the outright reduction of inequality within countries and at the creation of just societies for sustainable development until 2030, xenophobia and racially discriminatory acts have to be tackled with the utmost effective methods and drastically eliminated in the near future.

DEFINITION OF KEY-TERMS

Racism

According to UNESCO racism is the "theory of races hierarchy which argues that the superior race should be preserved and should dominate the others. Racism can also be an unfair attitude towards another ethnic group. Finally racism can also be defined as a violent hostility against a social group."¹



Prejudice

According to Oxford Dictionaries the term prejudice means "preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience". It also includes "dislike, hostility, or unjust behavior deriving from preconceived and unfounded opinions".²

Xenophobia

According to UNESCO xenophobia is defined as "attitudes, prejudices and behavior that reject, exclude and often vilify persons, based on the perception that they are outsiders or foreigners to the community, society or national identity.".³

Discrimination

In accordance with Oxford Dictionaries discrimination is "the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of race, age, or sex".⁴

<u>Stereotype</u>

Oxford Dictionaries define stereotype as "a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing".⁵

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

<u>History of Racism</u>

Racial discrimination, xenophobia and generally discriminative intolerances are social phenomena which exist since the beginning of the notion of society. Throughout history, one could state that racism and racial discrimination have caused severe wars and other global destructions. Notwithstanding, no one can surely and precisely predict where and when race-based discrimination has started, but it is



a fact that it existed in all societies, from Ancient Egypt and the Minoan, and the Mycenaean Civilizations, to Ancient Greece, the Byzantium, the Renaissance and to the Modern World.

To begin with, during the Renaissance and in conjunction with the Industrialization in the United Kingdom, indigenous people in Africa were captured and sold as slaves in the New World, namely the thirteen North American Colonies, which were under British occupation. The overwhelming majority of these slaves were black people, which were treated more as things rather than as people, due to their race. In addition, the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), which was – and still continues to be – an extremist



clan in the United States, expressed severe discrimination against the "Black" by underlying the supremacy of white people and by demanding the purification of the American Continent. Although after the civil war in the US slavery was annihilated, there were still hostilities and frictions between "white" and "black" people, mostly owing to deep-rooted racially discriminatory conduct.

Furthermore, in the modern world and until today, racism continues to be one of the most urgent scourges, despite the uncountable international actions against it. For example, during the 20th century many genocides against different races occurred, as a result of immense racist and xenophobic ideas. Such genocides were the Armenian (1914) and the Greek (1921) Genocides, the Jewish Genocide by the Third Reich and the Chinese Genocide by the Japanese Forces as parts of the Second World War and the Rwandan Genocide (1994). It must be underlined, that during the Third Reich many atrocities took place by the Axis, which was the name of the union between Germany, Italy and Japan. The German Nazi-government expressed extremist racially discriminatory beliefs against the Jews and other races and proceeded with many massacres. Moreover, Japan committed various atrocities and attacks against China

and the United States as well, with the most serious one being the "Nanking Massacre" with 300.000 casualties.

Finally, since the late 20th century, another form of racial discrimination is observed, namely the discrimination against Muslims. According to the "Sunday Morning Herald", an Australian Newspaper, Muslims in Australia and other parts of the world are common victims of racial discrimination. Although, discrimination against Muslims mainly falls under the category of religious discrimination, many Muslims and Islamist Organizations consider that such type of behavior is part of racial discrimination. On top of that, a term relating to discrimination against Muslims has been form recently, called "Islamopbobia", which is the fear or hatred against Islam. However, many countries have opposed to this term as they think that it is infringing the fundamental human rights, stated in the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights".

Psychology of Racism

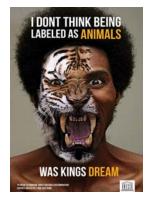
As far as the psychological approach of racism, racial discrimination and stereotyping is concerned, is has been concluded, after multiple researches using both biological and pneumatic methods, that such phenomena are typical of our brains. It has already been acknowledged, that humans categorize several aspects in their minds, so as to be able to comprehend them more easily, quickly and effectively. This categorization, however, does not only apply to things but to humans as well. Therefore, human beings tend to create different categories in their brains on the grounds of sex, race (namely color of skin) and age and consequently racist ideas and stereotypes too.

To conclude, racial discrimination and stereotyping could be described as innate characteristics and natural reactions. Nevertheless, the implications of these phenomena are critical and can both impinge on the psychology of the victims and cost the lives of innocent people.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

The "United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization" is one of the main UN bodies that actively contribute to the eradication of racial discrimination and xenophobia. Its main objective is to promote equality amongst races and this will be achieved through research and various projects. Finally, UNESCO has participated vigorously in the "World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance" in Durban and in the



"Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination", which officially ended in 2003.

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

The UN OHCHR has adopted a lot of resolutions concerning the elimination of racial discrimination, since its formation in 1993. The "High Commissioner for Human Rights" supervises the "Human Rights Council", situated in Geneva and in collaboration with the Council, the Commissioner has organized the "World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance" in South Africa and the "Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination" from 1994 until 2003.

The European Union (EU)

The European Union has contributed effectively to the World Conference in Durban by mentioning the special legislation against racial discrimination applied in the EU countries. Moreover, the EU has established the "European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia" which is collecting information on racially discriminatory incidents. Finally, the European Commission, having attended the pre World Conference meetings held in Durban, has donated the substantial amount of 3.7 million Euros to the World Conference, to other NGOs and to some LDCs (Least Developed Countries), so as to guarantee their attendance in the conference.

➤ The United Kingdom (UK)

According to BBC, the percentage of xenophobic beliefs has vehemently increased during the last two to three years. Although surveys have indicated that British people do not have any stereotypes and prejudices at all, a new confidential research of BBC has shed light on the people's true beliefs. Furthermore, the "Movement Against Xenophobia" (MAX), which is in operation since 2013, is aiming to oppose to the antimmigration policies adopted by the United Kingdom's Government.



➤ The Federal Republic of Germany (Germany)

Racial Discrimination and Racism in Germany could be combined with the genocides committed by the Nazi regime in the Third Reich and especially with the Holocaust, an action of mass murder against races defined as "life unworthy to life" ("Lebensunwertes Leben"). Currently, in the Federal Republic of Germany of the twenty-first century, racism is manifested in more lenient forms by the Neo-Nazi parties, like the "National Democratic Party of Germany". It must be stated that in 2015, Germany was the EU country with the highest refugee reception rate, as the

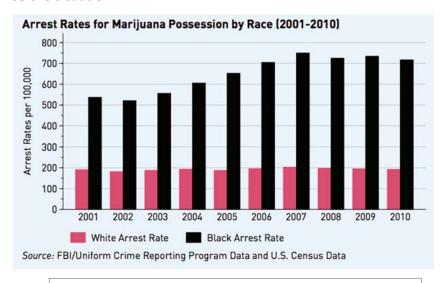
German Government managed to accept and integrate efficiently all the immigrants that asked for asylum.

> The French Republic (France)

Since the beginning of the 16th century and until the late 17th century, black slavery was considered legal in the French colonies in the New World. In 1685 King Luis XIV enacted the "Black Code", which was a document restricting black slaves from their judicial rights and stating that they belong to their masters. Moreover, this document declared that black slavery was transferable from one generation to another. During the Renaissance, many opinions were voiced against black slavery and against racial discrimination towards black people. Hence, in 1789 slavery was terminated with the "Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen". Finally, in May 10th 2001 slavery was condemned as a crime and thus, this day was transferred into a National Holiday. Nowadays, France includes a great amount of Muslims and other foreigners and so racist acts continue to exist. As a result of this ethnic diversity, The Front National, Le Pen's right extremist political party experienced a great rise owing to the xenophobic ideas that dominate in society.

The United States of America (USA)

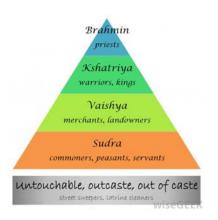
The United States of America is one the biggest intercultural countries in the world, yet African Americans, Asians and people of different races often face racial discrimination in their everyday lives. Back in the past, discrimination against "Blacks" was severe even after the abolition of slavery and therefore in 1876 the "Jim Crow Laws" were adopted that divided public amenities for "Whites" and for "Blacks". This scheme wasn't yet efficient enough, as further discrimination was expressed. Lastly, in the twenty-first century US, there are still people of different races that suffer from discrimination, although several measures have been enacted to enhance the situation.



"Although Black and White people commit the same crime, Blacks are arrested more frequently"

The Republic of India (India)

The Republic of India has a specific system to categorize its citizens called the "Caste System". According to it, from the time that each and every citizen is born, he belongs to a certain group of people, namely to a specific social class. This class, or as it is officially named "caste group", defines the living conditions of every person and also fixes their future development. Therefore, citizens cannot change and move between different groups and consequently they are born, get married and die in the same living conditions and social group. Of course, this system is thought to be fundamentally flawed, as people, who comprise the lower classes, live under extreme poverty and discrimination. Such an example is a supreme form of racism and it triggers serious problems.



"The Caste Hierarchy"

The Kingdom of Norway (Norway)

The Government of Norway instituted in January the 1st 2006 the "The Act on prohibition of discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, etc.", mostly know as the "The Anti-Discrimination Act", so as to advance equality among the Norwegian society and to exterminate the racial inequities and discrimination.

TIMELINE OF IMPORTANT EVENTS

Date	Description of the Event		
16 th - 17 th	Black people were considered to be slaves of the white people in		
century	the 13 colonies of Great Britain in North America.		
December 1865	"Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution" -		
	Abolition of slavery.		
1939 – 1945	World War II, a grave xenophobic act towards Jews, many of		
	which were exterminated by the Nazis.		
10 December	"Universal Declaration of Human Rights", which was declared by		
1948	the United Nations General Assembly in Paris.		
1959 – 1960	"Word Refugee Year" by the United Nations General Assembly.		
1963	"Declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial		
	Discrimination."		
1965	"International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of		
	Racial Discrimination."		
1964 – 1967	"Campaign Against Racial Discrimination" (CARD), which was an		
	organization inspired by Martin Luther King. It was mainly active		
	in the United Kingdom and it managed to be awarded with the		

	Nobel Peace Prize.		
1973 – 1982	"The First Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination."		
1978	"First World Conference to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination", which was held in Geneva.		
1983	"Second World Conference to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination", which was also held in Geneva.		
1983 – 1992	"The Second Decade for Action to Combat Racial Discrimination."		
14 – 25 June 1993	"World Conference on Human Rights", which took place in Vienna.		
1994 – 2003	"The Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination."		
31 August – 8 September 2001	"World Conference against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" in Durban, South Africa.		
2001	"International Year of Mobilization against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" by the United Nations General Assembly.		
2009	"World Conference against Racism" (WCAR), which took place in Geneva, Switzerland.		
2011 – today	The outbreak of the Syrian civil war alongside with the Arab spring and the situation in the Middle East caused millions of natives to immigrate to other countries.		
2013 – today	"Movement Against Xenophobia" (MAX).		
21 March annually	"The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination", which was officially declared by the United Nations General Assembly in October 1966.		

It must be acknowledged that the acts against racial discrimination and xenophobia are not circumscribed by the above-mentioned events. However, these events are the main points that illustrate the issue.

PREVIOUS UN RESOLUTIONS AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Previous United Nations Resolutions				
¹ GA A/RES/52/111	⁴ GA A/RES/53/132	⁷ GA A/RES/68/151		
² A/HRC/RES/7/34	⁵ A/HRC/RES/25/32	⁸ ICERD		
³ A/HRC/RES/16/33	⁶ GA A/RES/68/329	A/RES/1993/20		

Since the formation of the United Nations, many resolutions have been submitted and adopted in order to combat and eliminate racial discrimination and xenophobia. The "Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights" (OHCHR)

initiated in 1993 with the Resolution A/1993/20 the "Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerances" in order to observe racist-motivated acts and discrimination against people in minorities. The Rapporteur has been updated three times since 1993, with the first one being in 2008 with the Resolution A/7/34, the second one taking place in 2011 with the Resolution A/16/33 and the last one in 2014 with the resolution A/25/32. Additionally, in the General Assembly resolution A/68/329 of the 16th August 2013, the Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, informs the General Assembly about the Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council and enumerates the contribution provided by member states and other IGOs and NGOs.

Moreover, in 1997 the United Nations General Assembly declared in the resolution A/52/111 the organization of the "World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance", which was held in 2001 in Durban, South Africa, in order to find applicable measures to eradicate discrimination on the grounds of race.

Furthermore, the General Assembly resolution A/53/132 of 23 February 1999, which was on the "Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination and the convening of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance", announced that the year 2001 would be the "International Year of Mobilization Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia



and other Intolerance" and enacted serious legislation regarding the prevention of racial discrimination.

Withal, the General Assembly resolution A/68/151 of the 14th of February 2014 reiterates the importance of the complete

obliteration of xenophobia and racism in accordance with the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, formed during the "World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerances" in Durban.

Lastly, the "International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination" (ICERD), which is active since January 1969 and has been signed by 88 members, promotes racial differences and endorses the elimination of discrimination based on race.

Albeit several resolutions have been voted and adopted, the problem of racial discrimination and xenophobia remains vital. In order to have desired effects as regards its eradication, governments need to promote awareness and education on this topic. For instance, governments could organize special awareness campaigns

with the aid of United Nations bodies, including lectures, concerts, conferences and other interactive activities, so as to inform people about the implications of racism and xenophobia and warn them against it. Under no circumstances should governments neglect schools and primary or secondary education, since children should be definitely



informed regarding the dangers of racism and should learn how to avoid it. For example, countries could create multi-cultural school classes in public schools, in order for children to get used to ethnic diversity from an early age. In addition, governments could include in the education system's books foreign names and characters of different nationalities as well, so as to show students that being different is not a disadvantage. Last but not least, governments should focus on justice and create legislation and special laws that prohibit all forms of racism and condemning them illegal, hence making racial discrimination disfavored among society.

INTERESTING FACTS, FIGURES AND QUOTES

Facts, Figures and Statistics

- 1/5 of the world's population, namely around 150 million persons, are refugees and immigrants who were forced to flee from their countries and many of them are consequently suffering from severe bias-motivated acts and beliefs.
- According to reports, 2/3 of the arrested criminals in 2009, who were sentenced to life incarceration in the USA, were non-white.

(Sources: http://facts.randomhistory.com/facts-about-race.html and https://www.dosomething.org/us/facts/11-facts-about-racial-discrimination)

Famous Quotes

- "Until the philosophy which holds one race superior and another inferior is finally and permanently discredited and abandoned everything is war"
 - Bob Marley
- "History shows that it is not only senseless and cruel, but also difficult to state who is a foreigner."
 - Claudio Magris, Danube: A Sentimental Journey from the Source to the Black
 Sea
- "The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is an opportunity to renew our commitment to building a world of justice and equality where xenophobia and bigotry do not exist. We must learn the lessons of history and acknowledge the profound damage caused by racial discrimination."
 - Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the UN

FURTHER AUDIOVISUAL MATERIAL

- https://youtu.be/nXAluh2EE Q → "Racial Discrimination in Singapore"
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fTcSVQJ2h8g → "Racism is real"
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2hzcHNiLoao → "Bystander action on preventing race-based discrimination"

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Definition of Key-Terms

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- 4 http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/discrimination
- ⁵ http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/stereotype

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Timeline of Important Events

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- 4 http://www.un.org/WCAR/ares 53 132.pdf
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- http://www.schoenstatt.org/en/reflection/2015/04/schoenstatt-south-africashows-solidarity-for-victims-of-xenophobia/
- http://www.ywcaspokane.org/atf/cf/%7B2C377255-698A-4949-8C6B-990F7428B831%7D/racism%20hands.jpg

USEFUL LINKS

Here you can find useful links for further research.

- 1. http://www.un.org/WCAR/e-kit/backgrounder1.htm
- 2. http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Racism/SRRacism/Pages/IndexSRRacism.as
 px
- 3. http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/fight-against-discrimination
- 4. http://www.racismnoway.com.au/about-racism/understanding
- 5. https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/handy-psychology-answers/201101/the-psychology-prejudice-and-racism

As you may have also noticed in the section "Previous UN Resolutions and Possible Solutions", some Resolutions in the table are enumerated. Those numbers refer to certain links in the corresponding part of the bibliography, where you can read these resolutions mentioned.