
UN Human Rights Council
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Urgent Debate on Racism

Ambassador Aviva Raz Shechter
Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations in Geneva

Madam President,

We would like to start by extending our condolences to the family of George Floyd, whose tragic death was yet another sad reminder of the duty of confronting racism globally.

Discrimination does not have place in our societies. It is a challenge that threatens so many based on race, color, faith, gender and more. We need to stand up and condemn all forms of racism and intolerance and address its causes.

The scourge of racism exists everywhere and no country is immune to it. But the truth is that open and democratic countries are much better equipped to address it. If this Council has a role to play in defeating racism, it should refrain from singling out one specific country, let alone a strong democracy, where transparency, the rule of law and accountability mechanisms are in place, and public opinion has the tools to exercise public scrutiny over the authorities.

If we do so, we will once again miss the opportunity for so many all around the world who suffer every day from the ills of racism and discrimination.

If the international community is serious about its intention to eliminate racial discrimination, it should not shy away from closely examining the mechanisms that allow racism to flourish under dictatorships and ruthless tyrants. Such regimes leave no space for criticism and accountability, and prevent an open and transparent public discussion on racism, intolerance and discrimination .

Madam President,

Israel is committed to engage its best efforts in the struggle for equality and in eliminating the scourge of racism, as exemplified in its domestic policies. We call on the international community to take effective action towards raising awareness about inequalities and discrimination of any kind, and nurturing a culture of tolerance where incitement, hate speech and extremism have no place.

Thank you, Madam President.