



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

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Agenda item 9

**Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, follow-up to and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action**

### **Written statement\* submitted by Sikh Human Rights Group, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[2 June 2024]

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\* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



## **A Declaration on Diversity to Combat Racist Symbolism**

Glorification of Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance occur as a weapon of intimidation and expression of intense hate and prejudice against 'others'. They are symbolic of underlying tensions within society and clearly a failure of the State's attempts to eradicate racism through legal means alone.

Racism and prejudice arise either due to fear of the 'other', misunderstandings about the 'other' or assumptions of superiority.. Most of the causes of racism and prejudice are learnt behaviours and attitudes. Hence they can also be unlearned. More importantly they can be made unappealing.

While dealing with these attitudes and their manifestations such as Nazi symbolism and other forms of prejudicial or supremacist symbolisms, the law is important to punish those who engage in them, it has been said that the law based on human rights principles hasn't been successful in its own. Besides the human rights principle of freedom of expression is used in some States to defend the right of racist slogans and symbolism.

A Declaration on Diversity can compliment the human rights legalist approach to deal with racism, racial symbolism and other manifestations of racism. A Declaration on Diversity will be a commitment by states to promote policies that will make their societies comfortable with diversity, with the 'other' and respect each other. States can adopt policies in areas where they have most tensions around racism, xenophobia and discriminations.

A society that is at ease with diversity is highly unlikely to engage in racist symbolism, Nazi regalia, glorifying Nazism, neo-Nazism or other practices that fuel racism and prejudice. In modern times, society is considerably dependent on the State to do the right thing and promote the right public policy to encourage harmony within society.

States who promote policies that make diversity acceptable as the fabric of society, do not usually have frictions created by racism and do not generally have people resorting to glorifying Nazism and similar divisive activities.

We hope States will look to make the Durban Declaration and Plan of Action comprehensive and complete by committing to a Declaration on Diversity that will compliment the human rights approach with policy initiatives to encourage learning diversity as a natural and beneficial aspect of human life.

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