

Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect (Geneva)

Joint Statement HRC52

General Debate on Racial Discrimination

30 March 2023

Mr. President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Friends of R2P.

While racism and racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance may develop over a long period, an escalation into mass atrocities can happen swiftly. The UN Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes lists marginalisation, exclusion, hate speech, and hate crimes as potential risk factors, which may increase a country's vulnerability to genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes or ethnic cleansing.

History teaches that no society is immune to discrimination, and the rise in openly racist hate speech in recent years, including by heads of state and government, is a stark reminder that political rhetoric may quickly turn into incitement to violence. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed a shocking increase in racist language and violence, often accompanied by stereotyping, stigmatisation and the use of derogatory language, especially against vulnerable groups or persons at risk.

Atrocity prevention is a continuous process that requires constant engagement and dialogue with all actors. It includes an unwavering commitment to fighting racism at every level. This includes strengthening legislative and institutional frameworks, eliminating racial discrimination in political and public offices, and investigating, condemning, and sanctioning when appropriate, cases of racist or discriminatory behaviour or hate speech.

It is our responsibility to recognise early warning signs and react swiftly and decisively to protect populations at risk, but also to confront deeply entrenched racism.

Thank you.

(238 words)

Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect - Geneva

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