



**General Assembly Third**  
Social, Humanitarian, and  
Cultural Committee

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## Letter from the Secretariat

Delegates,

Welcome to the background guides for MiniMUN 2019! Whether it is your first or third Model United Nations conference, it is our hope at MiniMUN that you will continue to further expand your knowledge of MUN, world issues, and the UN itself.

The purpose of this background guide is to introduce the committee and the topic, as well as help you write your position paper. Details on position paper and submission are available under the Position Paper tab on our website:

<http://chsminimum.weebly.com/position-papers.html>

The topics and committees were chosen to reflect the problems that our world leaders face. As a delegate, you will be stepping into the role of world leaders. You will take on perspectives different from your own, and you will push for what your country believes to be right.

We have diligently worked to make this year's topics even more captivating and advanced than previous years. If at any time, you are having trouble understanding the background guide, finding information on the topic, or writing your position paper, please contact your chairs for help. They are more than willing to assist you to make MiniMUN a productive and engaging conference!

We are very excited to see you at MiniMUN 2019!

**Christine Pang and Curran Myers**

**Secretary-General and Director-General, MiniMUN 2019**



## **Description of Committee**

General Assembly (GA) is the main deliberative organ of United Nations (UN) and it has six main committees. Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Committee (SOCHUM) is 3rd Committee of the General Assembly. SOCHUM is an United Nations body designated to focus on preserving human rights and implementing fundamental freedoms all around the world. SOCHUM works in cooperation with the United Nations Human Rights Committee (UNHRC) and Economical and Social Committee (ECOSOC).

The agenda of the Third Committee of the General Assembly relates to an array of social, humanitarian affairs, and human rights issues that impact people around the world. This committee's work will focus on examining and discussing human rights, including reports of the special procedures of the UNHRC which was established in 2006. The committee will discuss questions relating to the advancement of women, protection of children, indigenous issues, the treatment of refugees, the promotion of fundamental freedoms through the elimination of racism and racial discrimination, and the right to self-determination. In addition, the Committee addresses important social development questions such as issues related to youth, family, ageing, persons with disabilities, crime prevention, criminal justice, and international drug control.

SOCHUM: <http://www.un.org/en/ga/third/>

# Elimination of Racism and Related Intolerances

## Introduction

Racism and intolerance are huge problems in our world. They stop people from enjoying their human rights. We need to do more to protect people and get rid of discrimination in our world. With your fellow delegates you need to find a way to work towards making the following goals a reality.

In the 19th century, many “scientists” divided humans into different groups because of their skin color or other physical traits. They believed that some groups were better than other groups. This is not true. In fact, there is less than a 0.1% difference between humans around the world. Although different groups of humans might have different skin color, or hair, or other physical attributes, in the end our DNA is the same. We are all one people.

The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination states that “any doctrine of superiority based on racial differentiation is scientifically false, morally condemnable, socially unjust and dangerous, and that there is no justification for racial discrimination, in theory or in practice, anywhere”. Although we know that all people are the same there still continues to be discrimination in our world.

Modern day ideas about race and racism began with the European exploration of the world in the 15th century. When Europeans met new groups they often colonized or conquered the areas. To justify their actions, they came up with the idea that the people they were hurting were less than human. Sometimes, they used religion to justify their actions. They said that they needed to teach people all over the world about Christianity. They made it seem like what they were doing was a good thing. It was not good. Colonization and the idea that one group was better than another caused impacts which are still being felt today.

## **The History of Slavery**

The history of slavery is connected to modern racism. Slavery is when one group of people with power decides they are not going to treat other humans as people. They treat other people as objects. Slavery has existed for most of human history. Slavery is now banned in every country in the world. But, it stills exists today! Today, it is often called “human trafficking”. In December 2007 the UN passed a resolution making 25 March International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

From the 16th Century to the 19th Century large numbers of people were forced from many places in Africa and sent to other parts of the world to be slaves. 12 million people were taken from Africa to the Americas and 14% of them died on the boats. Most of the slaves ended up in Brazil and the Caribbean. Imagine how this would affect the people involved? Millions of people were taken away from their homes and families and told that they were less than human. In Africa, the population went down. The demand for slaves caused war because groups fought each other to capture people to sell.

When slavery ended in many countries, people thought everybody could now be equal. But, 400 years of treating one group differently does not change things overnight. There is still discrimination against black people around the world. A lot discrimination against black people comes out of stereotypes and prejudices created during slavery times. We know black people are not treated the same as other people because there are gaps in wealth, health and education. This means the average black person in the United States has less money, less education and is less healthy than the average white person. These gaps need to be fixed. In 2013, the UN declared 2015–2024 the International Decade for People of African Descent.

## **The Nazi and Neo-Nazi Movement**

Black people are not the only people whom racism affects. In the 1930s a group in Germany called the Nazis came to power. Over the next 15 years Nazi Germany murdered 6 million Jewish people. They did not think of them as human beings. The Nazis blamed every problem on Jewish people. This event is called the Holocaust. It was one of the worst things that has ever happened in our world.

Today, some people call themselves Neo-Nazis. They do not like people of other races. They organize groups to promote hate and attack minority groups. In the US there was a rally in Charlottesville called “Unite the Right” in August 2017. Many Neo-Nazis and hate groups came to the rally. They shouted Nazi slogans and waved Nazi flags. The event ended with fighting in the streets and one person died when a Nazi sympathizer drove his car into a group of people.

Europe is seeing a rise in Neo-Nazism as well. There are many refugees and migrants coming to Europe and Neo-Nazis target them. In 2012, Germany had 6000 Neo-Nazis. In 2016, there were 1835 hate crimes reported to police in France. Racism is the belief that one ethnic group of humans is better than another group. There can be overt racism. This means that humans kill or control the lives of others because they think that they are better. This type of racism does not happen much anymore because most people agree it is wrong. There is also covert racism. This is racism that is hidden or part of the culture of a society. People are treated badly because they belong to an ethnic group. People might not even know they are being racist! But, the end result is the same. People are abusing the rights of humans. Therefore, it is important to eliminate even covert racism.

## **Past UN Action**

The United Nations (UN) has taken actions towards the issue of racial discrimination since its beginning, stating in the Charter of the United Nations (1945) the people are deserving of human rights and fundamental freedoms without distinction of race. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) that later followed, reinforces the principles that declared that all human beings are born free

and equal in dignity and rights. Article 1 of the UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1963) confirms this, by stating “discrimination between human beings on the grounds of race, color, or ethnic origin is an offence to human dignity and shall be condemned and is a fact capable of disturbing peace and security among nations.” The Declaration further targeted racism as an ideology, asserting “any doctrine of racial differentiation or superiority is scientifically false, morally condemnable, socially unjust and dangerous... Thus, there is no justification for racism in theory or practice.” This framework is very important as it sets the foundation for the work of the international community involving this topic. The UN General Assembly “repeatedly supported the legitimacy of the struggle of oppressed population,” recognizing discrimination as a result of colonialism in the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and People adopted in 1960.

### **Current Situation**

It is perfectly clear that racial discrimination does exist not only in lesser-developed nations, but all around the world. Xenophobia is often referred to as ‘new racism’ because of the post-war era shift from racial to cultural bias. In the 20th century, xenophobia often takes place as perceived threats and competition in job markets and public services. The political climate of the hosting state also often drives the citizen’s views of and reactions to the immigrants; if the government shows a defensive stance, such as strengthening border patrol, citizens are more likely to show xenophobia and discriminatory character.

Tremendous efforts have been made towards eliminating the various forms of discrimination in the world, but the battle is far from over. People of African descent, indigenous peoples, and many ethnicities are still subject to abhorrent discrimination throughout the world, and Member States are committed to taking any appropriate measures necessary to ensure their inclusion and respect. The global community must continue its diligent efforts in order to meet Sustainable Development Goals and reduce inequalities.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. What is the current stance with racism and related intolerance in the country you will be representing?
2. Who are the particular groups that are oppressed or discriminated against on a racial basis in your country?
3. In what ways can the issue of racism globally be changed?
4. What efforts has your country or other member states made towards the elimination of racial prejudice?
5. How can the UN take action now to eliminate racism and other intolerances in future generations?