

THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT AGAINST ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AND RACISM

IMADR Oral Statement: 31st session of the Human Rights Council

Panel discussion on the incompatibility between democracy and racism

18 March 2016

Thank you Mr. President,

We welcome this opportunity to address the incompatibility between democracy and racism at the critical time. Unfortunately, today we are witnessing growing racism and xenophobia in many parts of the world. Too often, political platforms have been used to rouse racism and xenophobia by ultra nationalist and fascist political leaders. These platforms have used hate speech and violent language with impunity. It is unfortunate that public officials disseminating the idea of racial superiority or ideology get away from facing proper sanction, and they continue to spread prejudice and hatred. Incidents of racial discrimination and hate crimes are reported every day. Racist hate speech in the internet is a particular concern, which severely harms vulnerable groups and divides the society. Yet, access to justice and protection for victims are often limited, while perpetrators enjoy impunity.

Mr. President,

We firmly believe that the full implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) is an essential step to combat racism and promote democracy. While we welcome the ratification by 178 States today, we regret that 85 States have not submitted their initial or periodic report by due date, failing to meet the obligations. Some of those have never submitted a report. We are concerned by their lack of political willingness to combat racial discrimination.

In order to tackle hateful propaganda of racial superiority and discrimination promoted by individuals and groups, States should take policy and legal measures in accordance with the article 4 of the ICERD. The article clearly illustrates that State parties should punish incitement to hatred and racial discrimination, prohibit racist organisations and condemn hateful messages by public authorities. However, many State parties are putting reservation under the article 4 and failing to take effective measures to counter extremism.

Against this backdrop, we would like to ask a question to the panellists:

1. How can the civil society help States to fulfil the obligations under the ICERD to combat racist extremism in order to promote democracy?

Thank you Mr. President.