

ISHR joint statement at the 47th Session of the UN Human Rights Council

Debate: Interactive Dialogue on the High Commissioner's report on systemic racism
(implementation of HRC resolution 43/1)

Speaker: ISHR- Fanny Toutou-Mpondo

Thank you Madame President.

This a joint statement.¹

We deplore the systemic underfunding of the UN human rights system and the drive for so-called efficiency, including the cancellation of general debates in June. General debates are a vital part of the agenda by which NGOs can address the Council without restrictions. We call for the reinstatement of general debates at all sessions, with the option of civil society participation through video statements.

We welcome that the report highlighted the death of Adama Traoré in France as “illustrative of challenges to seek truth and justice promptly in cases of deaths of Africans and people of African descent while in police custody”.

We regret that despite the information we submitted and the dire situation on the ground, Switzerland was not named as a country also plagued by these phenomena. As we stated in September 2020 at the Council, the lives of Mike Ben Peter, Hervé Mandundu, Lamin Fatty and many others killed by the police in Switzerland matter.

All States need to be held accountable for impunity for racist police violence and systemic racism. Silencing national situations equates to shielding States from scrutiny and therefore perpetuating systemic racism.

The High Commissioner should address Switzerland and reiterate that justice requires not having families wait for over 4 years to get a trial, and not having perpetrators of police violence systematically be acquitted.

France, as a member of the Council, should uphold the highest standards of human rights and fully cooperate with the Council's mechanisms. Yet, when it comes to racialized police violence, France allows a climate of impunity to persist when such violence occurs.

As highlighted in the report, it has been [five years of judicial proceedings and still no justice for the family of Adama Traoré](#). This is emblematic of the impunity, where countless families of victims have not received justice, many of them still awaiting trial after several years.

¹ International Service for Human Rights, Sexual Rights Initiative, Minority Rights Group

Judicial [delays, and repeated dismissal of cases are common](#) as there are few cases where police officers are sanctioned. When such sanctions are imposed, they fall far short of the right to effective remedy in line with international standards.

By contrast, judicial harassment against victims and their families, as well as defenders working on racial justice and accountability and violations against peaceful protesters who defend them, and extending far beyond the demonstrations, are affecting their private lives, through unfounded prosecutions and intimidation.

We urge France to end impunity for racist police violence, end judicial harassment against defenders working on police violence, and refrain from criminalising them. We also urge France to accept the [pending visit requests](#) by the Special Rapporteur on racism and Working Group on People of African Descent.

We urge the Council to establish a robust mechanism to enhance accountability for past and present gross human rights violations against Black people in the U.S., Latin America, Europe and globally, especially in the context of police violence.