



Every year on 21 March, the world commemorates the anniversary of the 1960 Sharpeville massacre, where dozens of peaceful demonstrators were shot by police in apartheid South Africa for protesting racially discriminatory laws.

This year's International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination focuses on "Racism and Sport". The theme was chosen by the UN Human Rights Office to highlight the problem of racism in sports, which remains a disturbing occurrence in many parts of the world, as well as to raise awareness of the role sports can play in combating racism and racial discrimination.

"There is no place for racism and intolerance in sport... Sport is meant to foster social cohesion, bring different cultures together in a celebration of healthy competition, and to overcome the diffidence and even contempt that all too often divide countries and communities in the political and social arenas." — said UN Human Rights Chief, Navi Pillay.

At a special event in Geneva, the UN Human Rights Office will highlight the issues raised by the persistent racism at sporting events.

Professional footballer, Kevin-Prince Boateng, from AC Milan, Edgar Davids, ex-Dutch international and currently head coach at Barnet Football Club and Patrick Vieira, ex-French international, currently an executive with Manchester City, senior officials from the Union of European Football Associations and the Federation of International Football Associations and other experts will share their views on racism in football .

Racism in sport, both by fans and competitors is an on going concern of the UN Human Rights Office. In September 2012, the Human Rights Council noted that, “Despite the immense potential of sport in promoting tolerance, racism in sport is still a serious problem.”

Referencing the Olympic spirit requiring “human understanding, tolerance, fair play and solidarity, the Council urged an intensified “fight against racism in sport.”

### [Event](#)

The event in Geneva 21 March will focus on football and the damage inflicted on the sport by racism but also its potential as a positive force to combat discrimination.

### [Social media](#)

Use social media to speak up against racial discrimination! Join the conversation using #FightRacism and share your views and experiences with others.

### [Related links](#)

Find much more, and very detailed information, on discrimination via these links on the website of the UN Human Rights Office.

### [Stories](#)

Discrimination is a priority of the United Nations Human Rights Office: read our feature stories about this issue and the anti discrimination programmes of the Office.

**Additional links:**

- [International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination \(UN Website\)](#)
- [Website by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights](#)
- [#FightRacism campaign \(Storified\)](#)

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