



21. March 2017. The UN Human Rights Chief calls for actions to combat hate speech and hate crime on the occasion of International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

“It is an annual reminder to us all to do more to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, hate speech and hate crimes,” [says](#) the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra’ad al Hussein.

For the 2017 [International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination](#), the theme is [racial profiling and incitement to hatred, including in the context of migration](#)

. Addressing the latter, the UN Secretary-General [pointed out](#)

that “migration is a pressing global issue that should not be viewed solely as a problem but rather as a potential solution to many of the challenges we face today. In the current atmosphere of rising xenophobia, it is essential to have a clearheaded understanding of the facts.”

So, what are the facts? Xenophobia and racism is increasing across the world, and a number of [examples](#) spring to mind, such as the 23% increase in hate crimes following Brexit in the UK and the rise in racism in the US towards Muslims after the election campaign started in earnest

in 2015.

Across Europe we also find a significant increase in racism and xenophobia. In Germany attacks on migrants increased by 42% between 2015 and 2016, and in Spain reported hate crimes increased more than three-fold between 2012 and 2016. Finland experienced a doubling of reported hate crimes between 2014 to 2015, when a total of 1704 incidents were [reported](#) . Roma communities in Europe are being subjected to identity checks [up to three times](#) as often as non-Roma, the prevalence of racism and [hate-speech in Bulgaria](#) is growing, and these are only some of the examples we could list.

For this international day, there is a special focus on racial profiling and incitement to hatred. [A report](#) submitted to OHCHR in September 2016 underlined that racial and ethnic profiling increases the discrimination already suffered as a result of ethnic origin or minority status. Ethnic and racial profiling has increased as part of counter-terrorism measures. The [report](#) noted that “migrants and minority groups are particularly vulnerable to these law enforcement practices, and that the global economic crisis only exacerbated the discrimination already taking place.”

However, the High Commissioner concludes his [statement](#) on the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination by saying that “the UN has launched several initiatives to fight racism and xenophobia, including

[Together](#) which promotes respect, safety and dignity for refugees and migrants,

[Let's Fight Racism](#)

, and the

[International Decade for People of African Descent](#)

. My Office, the UN Human Rights Office, is asking people around the world to

[Stand Up for Someone's Rights Today](#)

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And, around the world, that is exactly what many people are doing. Taking a stand against discrimination, no matter where it happens.”

