1. **What are the key challenges and issues of racial discrimination in your country/region today and how do you work to address them?**

In Indonesia, we have facing a series of difficult times, in particular when the Government of Indonesia has a lack of willingness to be engaged with several robust human rights norms that prohibited racial discrimination within the country. Despite major amendment of rule of law instruments with profound human rights standards after the authoritarian regime collapsed in 1998, the rampant practices of racial violence and discrimination are still strong in particular in conflict area such as West Papua and to some extent such possible attack and terror toward the Chinese Indonesian in different local elections in Indonesia.

There are several possibilities that can be taken seriously wherein the issue of racial discrimination is still hard to fight back. First, amidst the new hope of the current government of the President Joko Widodo, there is no compact policy to tackle racial violence toward the West Papuans. This inability is much related to the use of wrong approach in order to highlight the root problems, by keep relying to the use of excessive force to justify illicit law enforcement that have fallen in different practices such as torture, extrajudicial killing, enforced disappearances, violence against the Papuan indigenous people. According to KontraS’ data in 2015 alone there were at least 24 restriction of freedom of expression cases in West Papua, with approximately 246 people had been arbitrarily detained. We also found the similar trend in 2016 wherein there are 31 cases with dramatic numbers of at least 1549 people have been arbitrarily detained with no legal remedy. The issues of fundamental freedoms and access to justice are very closed with the lack of protection on racial discrimination especially to the indigenous peoples in conflict area such as West Papua.

In different degree, but has such tension on racial discrimination can also be perceived by the Indonesian Chinese community. Even though the harsh tension has not so high compared to the Indonesian authoritarian regime during Suharto’s time; but most of time the Indonesian Chinese has been used as a target with highly politicized situation, especially during the national and local election in different places over Indonesia. Albeit, the terrors and attacks toward the Indonesian Chinese has not fallen into such destructive issues, but the use of propaganda in different medium has triggered right wing groups and fundamentalist Islamic leaders that also attach to the Islamic conservative parties to give such pressure by justifying that a leader must a native one, and people cannot choose infidel figure that feared comes from the Indonesian Chinese. The case is now currently happening at the Jakarta governor’s election.

In order to respond the things above, the Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence (KontraS) has been working in different phases of work. It is important to have a solid database and to communicate for each situation with local organisations in the grass root. For the database can be used to be filed to the different oversight mechanisms that can be used to highlight the actual problems of violence and discrimination based on racial issue. Specifically for West Papua’s situation we have been working for long time with the journalists to bring human rights standards in wider perspective. This step is also important to bring the notion of racial violence in West Papua to the Indonesian society. Having such continuous and publicized the human rights reports can help us in order to strengthen the campaign on the given issue to the public. KontraS has very active and engaging to use the UN mechanism instruments to addressing the issues at the international for a. We have used the Universal Periodic Review for several times and building fruitful communications to the different UN Special Rapporteur that have such intersection issues with CERD’s mandate. The same steps has been using also for the issue of anti Indonesian Chinese in government’s role. At this time being we still documenting the tension.

**2. What has been your experience, as civil society, of engaging with CERD to date?**

In Indonesia, the issue of racial discrimination is very closed with human rights violations and specific crimes such as hate speech, strong restriction of freedom of expression, assembly as well as freedom of religion and belief. Yet, the Government of Indonesia seems very hard to ensure that all the law enforcement infrastructures can be working effectively to protect the minority ones. In international fora, we think the Government of Indonesia has closed plenty of information and access that are important to rectify the violations and as well as to give possible remedy to the victims. For organizational experience, we have used CERD’s mechanism at UN fora in order to addressing specific cases on tribe, religion, race and inter-group (SARA) campaigns that spread out hatred and racial violence in political succession. Even though using the submission sometimes would not give a direct impact to the government performance, but using international human rights mechanism is the only way to strengthen government commitment above the ratification gesture.

**3. How can the CERD improve and enhance its engagement with civil society, and its work on racial discrimination for greater impact on the ground?**

CERD as part of human rights mechanism should be appeared active and engaging with each government who still avoiding its commitment to combat racial violence and discrimination. However, working with the civil society is also important in order to get more input and alternative information that sometimes cannot be provided by the government, since it would violate the notion of state dignity and so on. Thus, we think CERD should establish a different way and approach, perhaps to set up informal meetings with different CSOs that working on anti racial discrimination, another way is to create multi coordination with different UN mechanism wherein we are sure there are plenty of human rights (including shadow and alternative report) that has been submitting and also having racial discrimination context within the report. By solidfying all the reports that has been submitted to the different UN system, we believe it could push more constructive recommendation the the government in order to fully realise their commitment and obligations.