

Statements from Brazil (national capacity)

Session 2: a.) Systemic racism and police violence

Brazil strongly repudiates all forms of racism and racial discrimination and condemns all acts of violence.

Under article 5 of the Brazilian Constitution, racism is a non-bailable offense punishable by imprisonment. The same article lays down that everyone is equal before the law, without distinction of any nature. All international commitments assumed by the country pertaining to the elimination of racial discrimination reflect those constitutional precepts as well as public policies implemented in Brazil to combat racial inequality.

We fully supported the decision of the HRC to hold a special session last July and engaged wholeheartedly in the debates that led to the adoption of resolution 43/1. In the Human Rights Council and other fora we will continue to defend the strengthening of national policies to combat racism.

Racial discrimination in police action must not be tolerated, and we welcome public debate to raise awareness for this matter. Law enforcement is essential to ensure public safety and to protect the right to life itself. As our societies expect, demand and deserve the highest moral standards from police officers, their dedication and professionalism must be valued and praised. Those found guilty should face the law. These are the lessons we should learn from tragic episodes where evidence of police violence and systemic racism has been found.

We recognize and regret that in Brazil, as in other countries, cases of violence against people of African descent continue to happen. We condemn any act of violence, including the ones perpetrated by law enforcement agents or by private security companies.

The tragic deaths of Miguel Otavio, a 5-year-old boy, and more recently, of Joao Alberto Silveira Freitas have shocked and saddened the people of Brazil.

- In Miguel's case, his mother's employer was arrested and later charged with the crime of abandonment of a vulnerable person resulting in death, which foresees punishment from 4 to 12 years in prison. She is now undergoing criminal justice prosecution procedures.
- The case of Joao Freitas, occurred on November 19, is under investigation in Brazil. Law enforcement authorities in the state of Rio Grande do Sul moved quickly to address the situation and arrest the aggressors. As investigations proceed, Brazilian society engages in a wide open debate on the causes of this sad episode.

Brazil will continue to confront challenges regarding racial discrimination head-on, through a democratic political process that involves government and society. While we acknowledge those challenges, we also stress the fundamental nature of the Brazilian family, its deep-rooted respect for diversity, and our union as a nation.

We remain open to share information, and to foster a constructive, respectful dialogue on how public policies can help decrease the number cases of violence and the degree of lethality.

(448 words)