

**Call for written submissions:
Visit by the United Nations Working Group of Experts
on People of African Descent to Belgium (4-11 February 2019)**

The UN [Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent](#) (WGEPAD) is undertaking a fact-finding visit to Belgium from 4 to 11 February 2019. The Working Group's visit is at the invitation of the Government and will be facilitated by OHCHR. The programme of the visit will include meetings with Government officials, national institutions, and civil society.

Call for written submissions

The Working Group would like to invite all interested individuals and organizations including people of African descent, representatives of civil society organizations, experts and academics in Belgium to provide information on the human rights situation of people of African descent in Belgium.

The Working Group is particularly interested in learning more about on the following topics:

- Key concerns including the most significant human rights violations that people of African descent in Belgium experience.
- Emblematic cases of racial discrimination faced by people of African descent living in Belgium;
- Racial bias and discrimination in the criminal justice system and law enforcement, including racial profiling and combating terrorism;
- Afrophobia, xenophobia, racially motivated acts of violence, hate crimes;
- Access to justice, protection of victims of racial discrimination and the legal aid system;
- Access to education, health, employment, housing and public services;
- Human rights of migrants and refugees, immigration laws, detention/probation centre; citizenship and deportation issues;
- Representation in the media, racist discourse, stigmatization and negative stereotyping; negative use of political platforms;
- Cultural Rights;
- Education, history curriculum-recognition and remembrance of past atrocities and legacies, teacher training;
- Racial equality and social cohesion;
- The situation of youth and children; women and girls; and multiple/intersecting forms of discrimination;
- Data collection/analysis and statistics on composition of the population.
- Information on measures to prevent racial discrimination, protect victims of racism and improve the human rights situation of people of African descent (law, policies, action plans, special projects, programmes or other initiatives).

Submissions should be sent to africandescent@ohchr.org, preferably by 18 January 2019. Respondents are requested to limit their submission to substantive analysis and recommendations and a maximum of 2500 words. Relevant reports, academic studies and other types of background materials can be attached as an annex. A short summary in English would be useful if the original submission is in another language. All input will be treated as confidential unless otherwise indicated.

What is the WGEPAD?

The WGEPAD is a UN body of independent experts appointed by the United Nations Human Rights Council and dedicated to improving the human rights situation of people of African descent. To fulfil its mandate, the WGEPAD undertakes country visits; holds two annual sessions; responds to information and allegations received concerning its mandate under the Communications procedure; and reports to United Nations Human Rights Council and the General Assembly on activities relating to the mandate.

The purpose of country visits

These visits provide an opportunity to examine in detail the situation of people of African descent in the country, to identify any problems and to make recommendations for how these could be resolved. By the nature of the mandate, the Working Group is required to look critically at the situation in a country and also identify good practices that could be replicated in other countries. The visits are intended to provide an independent and impartial assessment, which will then be of use to all actors.

What happens during a country visit?

The Working Group meets with relevant Government ministers, representatives of independent human rights institutions, UN agencies, civil society, academia, the media, human rights defenders, and people of African descent, among others. The Working Group will usually begin a visit in the capital city and then continue with visits to other cities or towns of particular relevance to the role and situation of people of African descent.

What sort of information is gathered during a visit?

The Working Group will gather the following types of information: any forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, Afrophobia and related intolerance faced by people of African descent; measures taken to prevent racial discrimination and protect victims of racism and hate crimes; mechanisms for the protection, integration and inclusion of migrants and refugees; responses to multiple forms of discrimination that specific groups of African descent may face and the efforts undertaken by the authorities to protect people of African descent from violations.

What happens after the visit?

At the end of the visit, the Working Group holds a media conference and issues a press release with its preliminary findings and recommendations. The Working Group releases a mission report indicating, among other things, the main concerns and recommendations for action. The report on the visit to Belgium will be presented by the Working Group to the United Nations Human Rights Council in September 2019.

Members of the Working Group:

There are [five members of the Working Group](#). Three members of the Working Group will participate in the Belgium visit.