



International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

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Summary record of the 2454th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Thursday, 4 August 2016, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Crickley

Contents

Consideration of reports, comments and information submitted by States parties under article 9 of the Convention (*continued*)

Combined twenty-first to twenty-third periodic reports of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Consideration of reports, comments and information submitted by States parties under article 9 of the Convention *(continued)*

Combined twenty-first to twenty-third periodic reports of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (CERD/C/GBR/21-23; CERD/C/GBR/Q/21-23)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland took places at the Committee table.*
2. **Mr. Downie** (United Kingdom) said that members of civil society had been consulted during the preparation of the report, and that he was confident that the consultation process had strengthened the document and enhanced the monitoring process. The United Kingdom was a multi-ethnic and multi-faith country in which 13 per cent of the population identified as belonging to an ethnic minority. Members of ethnic minority communities had made an enormous contribution to the social, economic, political and cultural life of the country, and had made their way to the top in many different areas. However, further progress was needed to create a country of genuine opportunity where ethnic origin and background did not act as barriers to success.
3. The Government had set out a series of goals to improve opportunities for black and minority ethnic people by 2020, which included: increasing by 20 per cent the number of black and minority ethnic people in employment, the number of new apprenticeships offered to black and minority young people, and the number of black and minority ethnic people going to university; and improving the proportion of black and minority people entering the police forces and armed services. The employment rate for black and minority ethnic groups was at a record high of 61.4 per cent, and half a million more people from ethnic minorities were in work in the State party as compared with 2010. A senior parliamentarian was leading a review of the criminal justice system in England and Wales to investigate possible bias against black defendants and other ethnic minorities, and was due to report in 2017. Universities were now required to publish admissions and retention data by gender, ethnic background and socioeconomic class. Another parliamentarian was conducting a review to examine the issues faced by businesses in developing black and minority ethnic talent from entry to executive level.
4. With regard to hate crime, the Government had published a new action plan to address the issue over the next four years. The launch of the plan had been particularly timely, as it had coincided with an increase in reports of hate crime directed at both European nationals and members of other ethnic minorities following the referendum on the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union. Hate crime reports had since decreased, although they had not yet returned to pre-referendum levels.
5. The Government's approach to integration was built around five themes: common ground; social mobility; participation; representation; and tackling extremism and intolerance. A review had been commissioned to look into the issue of social cohesion, and a report and recommendations were due to be published later in 2016.
6. **Ms. Jerdin** (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the Scottish Government, said that equality was at the heart of the national outcomes framework "Scotland Performs", which emphasized the importance of a fair and inclusive Scotland, addressed the inequalities in Scottish society and was aimed at building strong, resilient and supportive communities. Over the past five years, Scotland had become a more diverse country as a result of not only migration, but also the Scottish Government's active role in the United Kingdom's asylum seeker dispersal programme.

7. The Scottish Government had introduced specific equality-related policies and measures to shift attitudes and practices in the country, including action to integrate asylum seekers and refugees, and had welcomed the Equality Act 2010 and the resulting “public sector equality duty” requirement. A new Race Equality Framework had been established, which involved collaboration with civil society partners and communities. The Government was continuing to support the integration of refugees and asylum seekers through its “New Scots” strategy, and was also looking at how it could best improve the lives of Gypsies and Travellers.

8. The powers transferred to the Scottish Government under the Scotland Act 2016, including in the areas of tax and social security, gave it the opportunity to address inequality in the country, and the Government was looking at how the public sector duty regarding socioeconomic inequalities set out in the Equality Act 2010 could boost its efforts to tackle the issue. Although Scotland had not experienced the spike in hate crimes witnessed elsewhere in the United Kingdom, the Government remained vigilant. It was aware that such crimes were under-reported and that members of its communities continued to experience prejudice, abuse and everyday racism. The Independent Advisory Group on Hate Crime, Prejudice and Community Cohesion was examining the issue and was due to report shortly with its recommendations for action.

9. **Ms. Glenn** (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the Welsh Government, said that the initiative “Tackling Hate Crimes and Incidents: A Framework for Action” had been launched in Wales in May 2014, and that the associated delivery plan had been developed across Welsh Government departments to ensure that the aim of tackling hostility and prejudice was embedded in a number of key policy areas. A community cohesion programme had been implemented across Wales since June 2014 through eight Welsh Government-funded regional community cohesion coordinator posts. The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 had re-introduced a duty for local authorities to provide sites for Gypsies and Travellers, for which additional funding had been allocated via the Gypsy and Traveller Sites Capital Grant.

10. The Welsh Government was committed to playing a full role in supporting asylum seekers and refugees through the Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Programme. It had published the Refugee and Asylum Seeker Delivery Plan in March 2016, and was continuing to engage with groups representing persons with protected characteristics, including through its Race Forum and Faith Communities Forum.

11. **Ms. Farrell** (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the Northern Ireland Executive, said that the new Racial Equality Strategy 2015-2025, published in December 2015, committed the Executive to a review of its legislation, the roll-out of ethnic monitoring and the establishment of a group of ethnic minority representatives to be the voice of minority ethnic people and migrants within government. Until recently, Northern Ireland had been a region of emigration rather than immigration and had not developed as a multicultural society in the same way as other parts of the United Kingdom. However, it was now building on best practice to develop a diverse society, and was participating in the resettlement of Syrian refugees. The Executive allocated approximately £1.1 million per year to the minority ethnic sector through the Minority Ethnic Development Fund in order to foster good relations, and was developing a programme of work on the issues affecting Travellers and Roma groups, as well as a refugee integration strategy.

12. Referring to one of the Committee’s 2011 concluding observations, in which the State party had been invited to examine whether the legislative and policy framework to combat sectarianism in Northern Ireland would benefit from being underpinned by the Convention and the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, she said that the “Together: Building a United Community” strategy provided the framework for

government action in tackling sectarianism, racism and other forms of intolerance, and sought to address division, hatred and separation.

13. **Mr. Kut** (Country Rapporteur) said that many pertinent developments had taken place in the United Kingdom since the previous periodic report in 2011. There had been a further devolution of powers, which established legislative and policy areas that fell within the exclusive remit of different jurisdictions and raised issues concerning the application of the Convention and the coordination of action to comply with human rights commitments. Societal and official reactions to the migrant crisis in Europe and the passionate campaign on whether to stay in the European Union or leave — “Brexit” — had contributed to an increase in racism and xenophobia.

14. Turning to the current periodic report, he noted with regret that it had been submitted one year late. The inclusion of information on the Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories in the annexes to the report was useful. Although the State party claimed to have consulted non-governmental organizations when drafting the report, the Committee’s meeting with NGOs from the United Kingdom had revealed the opposite to be true. He invited the delegation to explain the nature of the cooperation between the Government and NGOs in the drafting of periodic reports to the treaty bodies. He commended the State party on the comprehensiveness of its common core document (HRI/CORE/GBR/2014), which contained useful statistical data relating to the Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories.

15. He recalled that, after having considered the information provided in the State party’s interim report (CERD/C/GBR/CO/18-20/Add.1) on the steps taken to investigate the underlying causes of the riots in August 2011, the Committee had requested in its follow-up letter additional information on the measures taken to give effect to the recommendations contained in the report of the Riots, Communities and Victims Panel. Noting that the State party had determined that the riots in question had not been racially motivated, and given that it had published a response to the Panel’s report in July 2013 outlining the remedial actions it had taken, he invited the delegation to describe the nature of those actions.

16. As the State party had rejected the Committee’s recommendation urging it to ensure that all instances of “stop and search” were properly recorded, the Committee had requested further information on the adoption of effective safeguards against the abuse of stop and search powers. However, the State party’s periodic report only provided information on the safeguards adopted in England and Northern Ireland. It would be useful to hear more about the safeguards adopted in the other devolved administrations of the United Kingdom and to learn of the reasons behind the decision to reject the Committee’s recommendation.

17. Recalling that the Committee had recommended that the State party should ensure that its new system of terrorism prevention and investigation included safeguards to prevent abuse and the deliberate targeting of certain ethnic and religious groups, he said it was regrettable that the State party could not provide information on the individuals subject to terrorism prevention and investigation measures (TPIMs), as they were subject to an anonymity order. He requested clarification on the nature and purpose of such orders and on the limitations on the measures that could be imposed on an individual under the new TPIM system. He asked why the State party continued to refute the view that TPIMs had a negative effect on certain population groups. Noting that the implementation of the Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures Act 2011 was reviewed annually by the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, he enquired as to the precise mandate and functions of the Independent Reviewer.

18. The Committee had found the response provided by the State party in its interim report to the Committee’s recommendation to halt the removal of the unauthorized traveller

site at Dale Farm, Essex, to be satisfactory and welcomed the information provided on the follow-up to the commitments outlined in the April 2012 progress report of the competent ministerial working group.

19. Although the Committee's other recommendations had been addressed in the periodic report in some detail, information on the steps taken by each of the devolved administrations of the United Kingdom to act upon them had not been consistently provided.

20. He noted with regret that the State party had rejected the Committee's recommendations calling upon it to incorporate the Convention into its domestic legal framework, to withdraw its interpretative declaration on article 4 of the Convention and to monitor the media with a view to combating prejudices and negative stereotypes which could incite racial hatred. He asked whether there was any possibility of the State party taking up those recommendations in the future.

21. He noted with interest that, although the State party did not consider the Convention to apply to the British Indian Ocean Territory, for the reasons set out in annex C to its periodic report, and maintained that unauthorized access to any part of the Territory could jeopardize the security of the military facility, it kept such restrictions under review and had commissioned an independent feasibility study of resettlement by Chagossians of the islands, including Diego García, which had been published on 10 February 2015 and was currently the subject of a policy review. Noting also that temporary access to the Territory was funded and facilitated by the British Indian Ocean Territory Administration to allow former islanders to visit, he asked whether the State party had changed its policy vis-à-vis the British Indian Ocean Territory.

22. Turning to the question of the implementation of the Equality Act 2010, he noted that, in England, each public authority was required to publish information at least annually to demonstrate its compliance with the general equality duty enshrined in the Act. He asked whether that information was available to the public and how it was used to promote equality. The fact that the Equality Act 2010 still did not apply to Northern Ireland and that the State party still had no Bill of Rights was a serious cause for concern. He recalled that the State party was obliged to implement the provisions of the Convention in all parts of its territory, notwithstanding the specific governance arrangements that it had adopted.

23. Although the Red Tape Challenge programme performed an important function in repealing or deferring legislation deemed unnecessary, care should be taken to ensure that effective legislation was not abolished purely in the interest of cost-saving. He asked what contribution the Red Tape Challenge programme made to the fight against racism and whether, in practice, all proposals to amend regulatory legislation were subject to impact and equality assessments before being sent to Parliament.

24. There was a pressing need for the State party to address the negative impact of its policy of devolution on its efforts to combat racial discrimination, particularly the lack of legislative and policy coherence across the devolved administrations. It was commendable that the State party had three national human rights institutes which had been accorded A-status by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions. However, the Committee would be interested to know whether all three institutions were endowed with the financial and human resources necessary to function effectively and independently.

25. Turning to the question of immigration, he noted with regret that the State party had rejected the Committee's recommendation calling upon it to remove the exceptions based on ethnic or national origin in respect of the exercise of immigration functions from the Equality Act 2010. He asked whether the State party would be prepared to reconsider its position in the future.

26. He asked what measures the State party had taken to address the intersectionality between sectarianism and racism in Northern Ireland; to close the existing employment gap between ethnic minorities and the wider population in the criminal justice system and other sectors; and to tackle racist bullying and prevent the exclusion of certain minority groups from schools. Noting that the State party had recognized the need for legal protection against caste-based discrimination, he asked when it would adopt legislation guaranteeing that protection.

27. Lastly, it was regrettable that the State party had declined to make the optional declaration under article 14 of the Convention recognizing the competence of the Committee to receive and consider individual communications. He invited the delegation to explain the reasons behind that decision.

28. **Mr. Murillo Martínez** said that the Committee would be following the consequences of the so-called “Brexit” with great interest, as some of the issues arising from that decision fell within the Committee’s purview. The election of Sadiq Khan, a Muslim, as mayor of London attested to the significant progress that had been made towards achieving racial equality in the United Kingdom.

29. The State party should give serious consideration to acknowledging the circumstances of the Chagossian community, which had become marginalized and itinerant, and to providing it with appropriate reparation.

30. In England, persons of African descent were often treated more harshly within the criminal justice system, as corroborated by the disproportionately high number of such persons incarcerated in the country’s prisons. In addition, persons of African descent were more likely to spend more than 72 hours in pretrial detention. Furthermore, the Committee had received reports that failings in the national mental health-care system often led to persons of African descent who suffered from mental health problems entering the criminal justice system, which was not an acceptable alternative to receiving appropriate mental health care. There was a clear need to increase the involvement of civil society in initiatives aimed at achieving equality in the health-care sector.

31. To his mind, the inequalities suffered by persons of African descent were a reflection of the systemic and structural racial discrimination that persisted in the State party, which was part of the legacy of the transatlantic slave trade. However, it seemed that that subject was not covered as part of the national curriculum. He would like to know how the State party planned to remedy the flagrant inequalities suffered by persons of African descent in the health-care and justice sectors. The State party should consider cooperating with national experts and persons of African descent in that endeavour.

32. **The Chair** said that it would also be useful to know how the State party disaggregated its statistical data.

33. **Mr. Avtonomov** said he was pleased to note that the State party had ratified the amendments to article 8 of the Convention concerning the financing of the Committee’s activities. It would have been helpful if the responses to the Committee’s previous concluding recommendations had been set out in a separate section in the report to make it easier to determine which recommendations the State party had accepted or rejected. It would be useful to hear more about the State party’s reasons for maintaining the reservations it had entered under articles 4, 15 and 20 of the Convention. It should be recalled that the purpose of article 4 was not to impair freedom of speech but to ensure that the exercise of that right did not incite racial hatred or discrimination. He asked what measures the State party had taken to address the structural racial discrimination that remained prevalent in its national territory, to break the cycle of poverty and criminality for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, to combat the prejudice surrounding those groups and to promote racial harmony.

34. It was his understanding that the definition of extremism had been the subject of a recent debate in Parliament and that various members of Parliament had raised concerns over the general nature of the definition proposed and the potential for its liberal application. The Committee could provide guidance in that regard if the State party desired it. He asked whether there were plans to amend the definition of extremism further.
35. He found it strange that the United Kingdom should maintain a reservation to article 14, especially as even its highest judicial body sometimes cited the Committee's documents. Could the State party explain its position?
36. He wondered whether the State party considered persons in certain Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories as indigenous peoples. He would have appreciated more detailed and up-to-date information in the periodic report, its annexes and the core document, especially on Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories.
37. **Mr. Yeung Sik Kuen** sought clarification of the "enforcement action" initiated by the Equality and Human Rights Commission against two police forces found to be disproportionately targeting black and Asian people when using stop and search powers. He also wished to know the name of the fifth police force with which the Commission had been working on the unfair use of such powers; did not naming it mean that that police force had failed to reduce its disproportionate use of stop and search against black and Asian people?
38. He expressed concern at the increase in legal fees, which hampered access to justice in discrimination cases. Access to justice would be further hampered by cuts in legal aid for cases dealing with housing, immigration, social security, employment and education. The reforms had led to a nearly 70 per cent drop in the number of cases in which people had received legal advice, with minority groups the most seriously affected. The 500 per cent increase in fees in immigration and asylum proceedings proposed on 21 April 2016 was likely to place people from ethnic minorities at a serious disadvantage. Furthermore, the proposed fee increases did not apply across the board, so that the increases in immigration and asylum fees could appear to be targeted and discriminatory.
39. He noted that, by not reporting on the British Indian Ocean Territory, the United Kingdom had simply brushed aside the request made by the Committee in its previous concluding observations (CERD/C/GBR/CO/18-20, para. 12), as repeated in the list of themes (para. 4) issued in response to the present periodic report. Moreover, it had persistently dodged the issue of the resettlement of the Chagossians. The Committee hoped for a frank and open dialogue with the delegation on that issue, especially in light of the March 2015 decision of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea questioning the British Government's creation of a Chagos marine reserve in April 2010, the real aim of which was to prevent Chagossians from exercising their right of return.
40. **Mr. Kemal**, noting that the State party's response to the Committee's recommendation that the Convention should be incorporated into domestic law was that the Convention was fully respected and "where necessary" enforced through its race discrimination legislation, said that such a position gave the United Kingdom the flexibility to exercise discretion, which was against the spirit of the Convention.
41. He asked whether a "colour-blind approach" was official government policy. While it might be akin to the doctrine that justice was blind, it might perpetrate racial inequality and even widen the gap between the affluent and the non-affluent, which was often determined by race and ethnicity. Moreover, the Darwinian "survival of the fittest" approach should be avoided in favour of ensuring a level playing field.
42. In any case, racial profiling negated the benefits of a colour-blind approach. He recognized the right of the United Kingdom to protect itself against terrorism, but stressed

that due regard must also be paid to protecting human rights. The Committee had heard reports of the insensitive and ill-considered interrogation of minors by the police and authorities on the basis of misunderstandings or hearsay. Such interrogations could have a chilling effect on some minorities, including United Kingdom Muslims. What safeguards were provided by law for those concerned?

43. He commended the Government on its goal to increase the employment of minorities by 20 per cent, but asked why the employment rate for black and minority ethnic groups was no higher than 61 per cent. Blind tests had revealed that persons with non-Anglo Saxon names were less likely to be invited to interview; that was not a sign of a level playing field. The Committee had also been informed of discrimination in employment, for example in the police force, where minority groups tended to occupy the lower ranks.

44. The incidents of racial violence and hate crime following the Brexit vote were worrying, although the State party had mentioned that the problem was abating. He hoped that concerted action by the country's leaders would improve the situation, but he was aware that young people from minority groups felt particularly insecure.

45. **Mr. Lindgren Alves** said that, unlike Mr. Kemal, he was impressed by the philosophy behind the State party's periodic report. The United Kingdom tended to favour the integration of those who were different. He fully agreed with a colour-blind approach; indeed, in taking that position, he had personally been accused of condoning structural discrimination even though that was completely untrue. The United Kingdom was right to promote a universal approach, rather than viewing ethnicities or races separately. As a result, in the areas of education and employment, for example, the situation of groups that had been disadvantaged in the past had improved significantly.

46. He was surprised to see the State party using the words "black and minority ethnic" people; in Latin America, that would be viewed as politically incorrect. However, he saw it as an advance, and one that somewhat alleviated the understandable fears about the significance of Brexit.

47. **Ms. Li Yanduan** asked how the United Kingdom ensured the full implementation of the Convention in all its territories, considering that it had not incorporated the Convention into domestic law and that the Equality Act 2010 was not applicable in Northern Ireland. As article 4 of the Convention was not inconsistent with the right to the freedom of speech, she asked why the United Kingdom insisted on maintaining its reservation to that article.

48. **Mr. Amir** said that British history illustrated how its past had led to the development of a democratic nation of diverse peoples. Democracy had brought many benefits, but had also left the ill-intentioned free to use religious hate speech to radicalize young Britons, with the resulting emergence of terrorist crimes. Preserving democracy meant acknowledging past mistakes in a nation's history and making amends, which the United Kingdom was now doing. Because of the specificities of the history of the United Kingdom and the very particular context in which racial discrimination had evolved and was being addressed, the legal standards and norms in place were peculiar to the country, but nonetheless robust. On that basis, he could appreciate why the State party might consider it unnecessary to integrate the Convention's provisions. However, as a party to the Convention, the United Kingdom had a duty to implement those provisions and he urged it to integrate the Convention into national law as a matter of urgency.

49. **Mr. Calí Tzay**, noting that in the periodic report the State party tended to refer solely to discrimination rather than specifically to racial discrimination and racism, said that, unfortunately, racism continued to exist in society and it was not possible to disregard issues of colour and origin, especially since, according to one NGO submission, the black population of the United Kingdom was particularly vulnerable to persecution: the 72-hour time limit on detention without charge was frequently exceeded if the detainee was black;

black persons faced segregation in prison; and, relative to the total population, persons of black African origin now accounted for a higher proportion of detainees in the United Kingdom than they did in the United States of America. He invited the delegation to comment on the institutional racism against persons of black African origin that pervaded all layers of the criminal justice system and to provide up-to-date statistics on the ethnic and racial composition of the prison population.

50. Expressing concern that the marked increase in the armed police presence in London necessitated by the security situation could fuel tensions between police officers and innocent members of minority communities, he asked what special training was provided to armed officers patrolling the streets and what other measures were in place to reduce the risk of hostile interactions and enhance community relations. Lastly, commending the State party's prominent role in the formulation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, during which it had demonstrated a genuine understanding and appreciation of the issues, he was personally curious to know whether the delegation could provide any insights into the role of the Picts in building the United Kingdom and what had become of that community.

51. **Mr. Khalaf**, reiterating concerns raised earlier about the State party's failure to integrate the Convention and the obstacles to its implementation within a decentralized legal arsenal, asked what provisions, instead of those of the Convention, guided court decisions in cases involving racial discrimination. Since those provisions were almost certainly in line with article 4 of the Convention, he failed to understand why the State party insisted on maintaining the reservation entered to that article and joined other Committee members in calling for the reservation to be lifted.

52. In view of the current migration and refugee crisis in Europe, he would appreciate an explanation of the State party's asylum procedures, including, in particular, its policy on family reunification and the treatment of unaccompanied minors and minors who became separated from their families while travelling, especially in light of article 2 of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 30. He would particularly appreciate the delegation's comments on the discriminatory policy whereby applicants for social housing were apparently required to provide an existing address and asylum seekers could thus be denied equitable access to housing, in violation of article 2.

53. **Ms. Shepherd** said that, while the State party's commitment to building integrated communities was a laudable aspiration, she did not support its "colour-blind" approach to addressing inequality when certain people were clearly disadvantaged due to the colour of their skin or their ethnicity. Targeted measures were undoubtedly needed to improve their situation. She had some concerns about the potential impact of the Prevent Agenda on freedom of expression, especially in universities where robust academic debate was the norm, and would like to know what the State party was doing to prevent certain minority groups from being singled out. She also had some concerns about the increasingly frequent use of the descriptor "black and minority ethnic" in the United Kingdom. How did the use of such a broad, collective term help the authorities and society in general make sense of the differing needs and situations of all people falling under that umbrella?

54. As the most widely accepted global body fighting racial discrimination, the Committee supported all related United Nations initiatives, including the International Decade for People of African Descent. Since, as a party to the Convention and a country in which around 3 per cent of the population were of African descent, the United Kingdom had a duty to implement the United Nations General Assembly resolution 68/236 proclaiming the International Decade, she was concerned about reports that the Government had thus far done nothing to recognize the International Decade and had no plans to do so. Were those reports correct? And if they were not, what would the State party's priority actions be?

55. **Ms. Hohoueto**, adding her voice to the concerns already raised about the State party's failure to integrate the Convention into its legal system and the fact that responsibility for discrimination was devolved to local authorities, asked how the State party could guarantee the consistent application of national legislation on equality throughout the country. She suggested that a national oversight mechanism was needed.

56. **Mr. Kut**, referring to alarming media reports of a spike in anti-Semitism and Islamophobia and claims that over 6,000 hate crimes had been recorded in the previous month alone, said that more information was needed on the State party's plans to address the rise in those phenomena, guarantee proper application of the law and ensure that hate speech and hate-motivated offences were duly investigated and prosecuted. He would appreciate the delegation's comments on the generalized feeling that the "prevent duty", adopted in June 2015, could result in further negative stereotyping of Muslims. He would also like more information about the detention of asylum seekers; clarification as to the statutory time limits for detention, the level of judicial oversight and the possibilities for judicial review; and a response to allegations concerning the deaths in custody of persons from black minority groups. Had those deaths been duly investigated and had any prosecutions been brought? He also invited the delegation to comment on the fact that, while the report addressed the situation of Gypsies and Travellers, it did not cover Roma issues. Lastly, he asked what plans were in place to address the overt racism and real and pressing problems that, according to information provided by the Human Rights Commission of the Turks and Caicos Islands, Haitians residing in that territory apparently faced.

57. **The Chair** said that she remained concerned about the negative implications of the Localism Act passed in 2011. She would like to know how the Act's implementation was working on the ground and how the central authorities ensured that local, municipal and devolved administrations were in a position to fulfil the duties they had had to assume under the Act. She had similar concerns about the "prevent duty", which appeared random in the manner that it attributed responsibility for reporting and potentially opened the door to discrimination, and about the so-called identity tests used to determine whether Travellers and Gypsies should be eligible to access traveller sites. Statistics indicated that the number of such sites made available by local authorities had decreased significantly. The apparent lack of political will to address that scarcity was, at least in part, another adverse impact of the Localism Act.

58. Like other Committee members, she was concerned that the State party's strategy for addressing inequality downplayed the contribution of race and ethnicity to social and economic disadvantage, besides being at odds with legislation already in place and with the voluntary and substantial commitment that the United Kingdom had made to addressing racial discrimination and promoting integration rather than assimilation. She wished to know how the Government intended to ensure the continuing application and efficacy of the special measures required to achieve that integration, bearing in mind that there was no place for racial discrimination in a truly integrated society.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.