



International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

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Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

Concluding observations on the twenty-fifth periodic report of Cyprus*

1. The Committee considered the twenty-fifth periodic report of Cyprus¹ at its 3203rd and 3204th meetings,² held on 16 and 17 April 2026. At its 3217th meeting, held on 27 April 2026, it adopted the present concluding observations.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee welcomes the submission of the twenty-fifth periodic report of the State Party. It expresses its appreciation for the opportunity to renew its constructive dialogue with the State Party's delegation on the measures taken during the reporting period to implement the Convention. The Committee thanks the State Party for the oral responses provided by the delegation and for the supplementary information provided to it in writing.

B. Positive aspects

3. The Committee welcomes the following legislative, institutional and policy measures taken by the State Party:

(a) The amendment in 2017 of the Criminal Code to explicitly allow courts to consider racist and xenophobic motivation as an aggravating circumstance in sentencing;

(b) The enactment in 2018 of Act No. 73(I)/2018) establishing the Administrative Court of International Protection, aimed at improving access to justice and expediting asylum-related cases;

(c) Amendments in 2016 to the legal aid law extending access to legal aid for applicants for international protection, including judicial review of asylum-related decisions;

(d) The measures taken in 2019 to strengthen the Office of the Ombudsperson, including the approval of additional staff posts and reforms to the recruitment procedure;

(e) The adoption in 2021 of the first national strategy for the protection and promotion of human rights;

(f) The institutionalization and yearly monitoring of the Code of Conduct against Racism and Guide for Managing and Recording Racist Incidents (first introduced in 2014).

* Adopted by the Committee at its 117th session (13 April–1 May 2026).

¹ [CERD/C/CYP/25](#).

² See CERD/C/SR.3203 and CERD/C/SR.3204.



C. Concerns and recommendations

4. While the Committee notes that the State Party does not exercise effective control over all of its territory and is thus unable to ensure the full application of the Convention, it remains concerned that the current political situation hinders efforts to protect vulnerable groups covered by the Convention in the territory under its control.

Peace process and intercommunal relations

5. The Committee welcomes the ongoing peace process. The Committee is aware that the protracted conflict in Cyprus and the continued division of the island contributes to the ongoing tensions between the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot communities.

6. **The Committee encourages the State Party to continue its engagement in the peace process in order to seek a comprehensive settlement to the problem. In addition, the Committee continues to support the recommendations of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights with regard to addressing underlying human rights concerns,³ in particular with regard to rights also enshrined in the Convention. The Committee requests the State Party to continue to provide it with updated information on efforts to improve relations between the two communities.**

Statistics

7. Noting the information provided regarding the relative and absolute number of asylum applications in the State Party, as well as the information provided on the ethnic composition of the population living in areas under the effective control of the State Party and the results of the 2021 census, the Committee is nonetheless concerned about the lack of sufficiently detailed information on the ethnic composition of the population, including disaggregated statistics on the nationality of non-citizens and people of African descent. These shortcomings prevent a full proper assessment of the extent of racial discrimination in the State Party (art. 1).

8. **Recalling its previous recommendation⁴ and its general recommendations No. 4 (1973) concerning reporting by States Parties under article 1 of the Convention, No. 8 (1990) concerning the interpretation and application of article 1 (1) and (4) of the Convention and No. 24 (1999) concerning article 1 of the Convention, the Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Include, in its next periodic report, reliable, up-to-date and comprehensive statistics on the demographic and ethnic composition of the population, based on the principle of self-identification, including detailed statistics on ethnic groups and non-citizens such as migrants, refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons;**

(b) **Produce updated disaggregated statistics on the socioeconomic situation of ethnic groups and non-citizens, including on their access to education, employment, healthcare and housing, with a view to creating a detailed empirical basis for assessing the equal enjoyment of the rights enshrined in the Convention.**

Domestic application of the Convention

9. The Committee notes the information provided by the State Party that ratified international treaties are part of the domestic legal order pursuant to the Constitution. The Committee nevertheless regrets the limited information provided on cases in which the provisions of the Convention were invoked before or applied by domestic courts, including lower-level courts (art. 2).

10. **The Committee recommends that the State Party conduct training programmes and awareness-raising campaigns, in particular for judges, prosecutors, lawyers, law**

³ See <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/upr/sessions/session46/hc-letters/HC-letter-Republic-Cyprus-en.pdf>.

⁴ CERD/C/CYP/CO/23-24, para. 9.

enforcement officials and other relevant civil servants, to ensure that the provisions of the Convention are invoked, when relevant, by and before domestic courts. It requests the State Party to include in its next periodic report specific examples of the application of the Convention by all levels of domestic courts.

Legal framework

11. The Committee notes the information provided by the State Party regarding the protection against racial discrimination afforded by the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages – to both of which Cyprus is a Party – as well as article 28 of the Constitution, guaranteeing equality before the law and prohibiting discrimination, including on the grounds of race, community, religion, language and ethnic or social origin. However, the Committee is concerned that the absence of a unified anti-discrimination law fully reflecting the scope of the Convention may leave gaps in the State Party's ability to adequately address racial discrimination (arts. 1, 2 and 6).

12. The Committee recommends that the State Party adopt comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation containing an explicit definition of racial discrimination on all the grounds enumerated in article 1 of the Convention and expressly prohibiting structural, direct, indirect and intersecting forms of discrimination in both the public and the private spheres. The Committee invites the State Party to make full use of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendations when preparing such legislation.

National human rights institution

13. While welcoming the accreditation with A status of the Office of the Commissioner for Administration and the Protection of Human Rights (Ombudsman), and the measures adopted to strengthen it, including the increase in staff in recent years, the Committee is concerned that the human, technical and financial resources allocated to the Commission remain insufficient for it to effectively execute its mandate, including pertaining to the volume of cases related to racial discrimination. It is also concerned that complaints of racial discrimination are not clearly analysed and disaggregated by specific grounds of discrimination, which limits the ability to identify and demonstrate qualitative and quantitative trends (art. 2).

14. Recalling its previous recommendation,⁵ the Committee urges the State Party to continue strengthening the Office of the Commissioner for Administration and the Protection of Human Rights (Ombudsman), providing it with adequate human, technical and financial resources to ensure that it can execute its mandate effectively, independently and in full compliance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles), including by reporting on complaints of racial discrimination.

Hate speech

15. The Committee notes the various legislative and policy measures enacted by the State Party to prevent and combat hate speech, including improved hate crime recording mechanisms and guidance, expanded training programmes for police and the AWARE campaign. However, the Committee is concerned about:

- (a) Inadequate measures to monitor and address hate speech in the media, on the Internet, on social media platforms and in connection with sports events;
- (b) The lack of distinction between hate speech and hate crimes in public records;

⁵ CERD/C/CYP/CO/23-24, para. 15.

(c) Reports of xenophobic expressions against Turkish Cypriots, non-citizens, particularly migrant workers, Muslim communities and persons of African descent, who are frequently portrayed as threats to employment, the demographic composition of the population, culture or religion, and the use of xenophobia as a political tool, including by Members of Parliament;

(d) Inadequate implementation of the European Union regulatory framework on digital services pertaining to initiatives to address illegal hate speech online (arts. 1, 4 and 6).

16. Recalling its general recommendation No. 35 (2013) on combating racist hate speech, the Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) **Take comprehensive measures to monitor and address hate speech in traditional media, on the Internet, on social media platforms and at sports events, including by establishing effective mechanisms for reporting and removing racist content online;**

(b) **Continue to collect and publish disaggregated statistics on hate speech and hate crimes as separate categories of crimes, including the number of complaints, investigations, prosecutions and convictions, and provide this information in its next periodic report;**

(c) **Intensify training for law enforcement officials, prosecutors and judges on identifying, investigating and prosecuting hate speech and hate crimes, and ensure that victims have access to effective remedies;**

(d) **Develop and implement strategies to combat xenophobia and negative stereotypes against Turkish Cypriots, as well as Muslim communities, people of African descent and non-citizens, including migrant workers and others considered as such;⁶**

(e) **Expand public awareness campaigns promoting tolerance and diversity and ensure that political discourse does not incite racial hatred or discrimination.**

Discrimination against migrant workers

17. The Committee is concerned about reports of exploitation and abuse of migrant workers in the State Party, including those employed in low-skilled sectors such as agriculture, domestic work and services. It is also concerned about allegations of excessive working hours, non-payment or delayed payment of wages, confiscation of identity documents and substandard living conditions. The Committee is further concerned that migrant workers' residence status often continues to be tied to a specific employer, which may create dependency and increase their vulnerability to abuse. The Committee is concerned about reports of barriers faced by migrant workers in accessing justice and effective remedies, including limited access to legal aid, fear of retaliation or deportation, language barriers and insufficient labour inspections, particularly in private households employing domestic workers (arts. 2 and 5).

18. The Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) **Review its migration and labour policies with a view to repealing dependency on a single employer, including by enabling migrant workers to change employers and sever ties with recruitment agencies without jeopardizing their residence status;**

(b) **Strengthen labour inspections and enforcement mechanisms, including in sectors with a high risk of exploitation and occupational hazards, such as agriculture,**

⁶ See joint general recommendation No. 38 (2025) of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and general comment No. 7 (2025) of the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families on general guidelines for eradicating xenophobia towards migrants and others perceived as such; and joint general recommendation No. 39 (2025) of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and general comment No. 8 (2025) of the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families on thematic guidelines for eradicating xenophobia towards migrants and others perceived as such.

domestic work and the service industry, and ensure that all allegations of abuse are promptly, effectively and impartially investigated, that perpetrators are prosecuted and that the sanctions imposed are commensurate with the offence;

(c) Prevent and effectively sanction the confiscation of identity documents by employers, ensure the timely and full payment of wages and improve oversight of the working and living conditions of migrant workers, including domestic workers working in private households;

(d) Increase awareness among migrant workers of their rights, including through targeted outreach and information campaigns in relevant languages.

Detention of migrants

19. Noting the information provided by the State Party regarding institutional reforms, improved detention standards and training programmes for relevant staff, the Committee is concerned about reports of the continued use of detention of migrants, including for the purpose of deportation, reportedly as a routine measure and for prolonged periods. The Committee is also concerned about reports that migrants awaiting deportation are in some cases detained together with persons charged with criminal offences. It is further concerned about inadequate reception conditions and capacity, including reports that not all asylum-seekers undergo vulnerability assessments, that they may remain for extended periods in reception facilities and that conditions in such facilities are in certain cases substandard (arts. 2 and 5).

20. **The Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) Ensure that the detention of migrants is used only as a measure of last resort, for the shortest possible period and subject to judicial oversight;

(b) Ensure that all operations aimed at identifying undocumented migrants comply fully with international human rights standards and guarantee that no migrant is detained or deported without due process, including prompt judicial review of detention;

(c) Guarantee that all migrants, including undocumented migrants, have access to legal aid, interpretation services and information on their rights in a language that they understand;

(d) Enhance measures to prevent the abuse of migrants in detention, including by strengthening independent monitoring and complaint mechanisms;

(e) Ensure that the conditions in detention centres are reviewed and improved so that essential services, including access to healthcare and education for children, are in full compliance with international humanitarian standards;

(f) Collect and regularly publish disaggregated statistics on the prosecution and detention of non-citizens, including migrant workers.

Rights of refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons

21. The Committee notes the information provided by the State Party regarding receiving and assisting a significant number of asylum-seekers and refugees. However, it is concerned about reports indicating challenges in ensuring the full enjoyment of rights by refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons without discrimination. In particular, it is concerned about inadequate reception conditions and capacity, delays in the identification of vulnerable persons and barriers in access to essential services, including healthcare, housing, education and employment (arts. 2 and 5).

22. **Recalling its general recommendation No. 30 (2004) on discrimination against non-citizens, the Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) Expand and strengthen measures to ensure adequate conditions and capacity in reception centres;

(b) **Expedite the identification of vulnerable persons and guarantee effective access for refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons to essential services, including healthcare, housing, education and employment, without discrimination;**

(c) **Ensure respect for the right to seek asylum by enabling effective access to its territory and complying fully with the principle of non-refoulement;**

(d) **Take effective measures to prevent statelessness, ensuring that all children born in the State Party, including children of undocumented migrant workers, asylum-seekers and stateless persons, are registered at birth without discrimination.**

Trafficking in persons

23. The Committee acknowledges the range of measures taken by the State Party to prevent trafficking in persons, to protect and support victims and to strengthen the prosecution of perpetrators, including through the 2019 amendment to the law on the prevention and combating of trafficking in and exploitation of persons and the protection of victims of 2014 (Act No. 60(I)/2014), which criminalizes receiving services from a victim of trafficking in persons. The Committee also acknowledges the increase in the number of convictions for trafficking. However, the Committee is concerned that trafficking in persons for the purposes of labour and sexual exploitation remains a problem in the State Party, particularly affecting migrant women from Asia, Eastern Europe and sub-Saharan Africa, and that victims of trafficking are sometimes deported (arts. 2, 5 and 6).

24. **The Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Ensure the full and effective enforcement of the law on the prevention and combating of trafficking in and exploitation of persons and the protection of victims of 2014 and subsequent amendments, and allocate adequate resources for its implementation;**

(b) **Strengthen mechanisms for the early identification of victims of trafficking, including among migrant workers, and provide victims with immediate protection and assistance;**

(c) **Continue and intensify efforts to investigate, prosecute and convict perpetrators of trafficking, ensuring that penalties are commensurate with the gravity of the crime, and refrain from deporting victims of trafficking;**

(d) **Enhance mechanisms to identify victims of trafficking in persons, including reviewing deficiencies in the identification of persons subjected to trafficking for purposes of labour exploitation, in particular in agriculture and construction.**

Intercommunal initiatives, interaction and freedom of movement

25. While the Committee notes the information provided by the State Party regarding measures to promote intercommunal contact and cooperation between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities, it is concerned about reports indicating that such initiatives remain limited in scope and impact. The Committee is also concerned about obstacles affecting freedom of movement, including legal, administrative and practical barriers, which may hinder meaningful interaction between the communities. The Committee is further concerned about the lack of detailed information on measures taken to facilitate sustained intercommunal engagement (arts. 2 and 5).

26. **The Committee recommends that the State Party expand and strengthen measures to promote sustained intercommunal engagement, including by increasing the number of crossing points and removing the legal, practical and administrative barriers under its control to facilitate the freedom of movement of both communities.**

Situation of Turkish Cypriots

27. The Committee is concerned about reports of obstacles faced by Turkish Cypriots in the equal enjoyment of rights, including as set out in the Constitution of the State Party, compared to Greek Cypriots, including for children of mixed marriages involving Turkish Cypriots, who reportedly face significant difficulties in acquiring nationality. The Committee

is also concerned about reports of the limited integration of Turkish Cypriots into public institutions, including the civil service, the police and the judiciary. It is further concerned about reports of unequal access to services and opportunities, including in healthcare, employment, public broadcasting and participation in sports and cultural life (arts. 2 and 5).

28. The Committee recommends that the State Party take concrete and targeted measures to eliminate structural barriers affecting Turkish Cypriots, including by ensuring non-discriminatory access to nationality in practice, promoting effective representation in public institutions and guaranteeing equal access in practice to public services, employment, healthcare and cultural and social life, in line with the Constitution of the State Party. It also recommends that the State Party monitor implementation and provide information on progress achieved.

29. Noting the information provided by the State Party regarding measures to expand the teaching and use of the Turkish language, the Committee is concerned about reports that language requirements for certain types of jobs, including Greek language proficiency tests, may have a discriminatory effect in practice, despite Turkish being an official language of the State Party. The Committee is also concerned about reports of the limited use in practice of the Turkish language in public administration and education, including the insufficient availability of Turkish-language education in certain areas (arts. 2 and 5).

30. The Committee recommends that the State Party eliminate discriminatory language barriers and ensure the effective use of Turkish in public administration and education.

Situation of Roma (Kurbet)

31. The Committee notes the information provided by the State Party regarding the National Roma Strategic Framework (2021–2030). However, the Committee is concerned that the State Party considers Roma (Kurbet) as part of the Turkish Cypriot community, and not as a distinct ethnic minority. The Committee remains concerned that Roma (Kurbet) continue to experience discrimination, including in employment, poorer living conditions and general stigmatization, and face difficulties in access to adequate housing, water, electricity and sanitation, exposure to racist speech and attacks and difficulties in access to education, with Roma (Kurbet) children experiencing low school attendance and high dropout rates (arts. 2 and 5).

32. The Committee, recalling its general recommendation No. 27 (2000) on discrimination against Roma, recommends that the State Party recognize Roma (Kurbet) as a distinct ethnic minority. It reiterates its previous recommendation⁷ that the State Party step up efforts to address the precarious situation of the Roma (Kurbet) community and calls upon the State Party to ensure that measures taken, including through the National Roma Strategic Framework (2021–2030), secure their integration and address the stigmatization, marginalization and racial discrimination that they experience. It requests the State Party to provide information on measures taken and progress made in its next periodic report.

School bullying and violence

33. The Committee is concerned about reports of racist bullying and violence, particularly in primary schools, including against people of African descent, and that the Observatory on School Violence does not provide statistics on the ethnicity of victims (arts. 2 and 5).

34. The Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) Adopt and effectively implement comprehensive anti-racism policies and programmes in the education sector, including awareness-raising, teacher training and age-appropriate curricula addressing racial discrimination;

⁷ CERD/C/CYP/CO/17-22, para. 16.

(b) Ensure that all incidents of racist bullying and violence are systematically recorded, investigated and sanctioned and that victims have access to effective reporting mechanisms and support services;

(c) Strengthen the mandate and capacity of the Observatory on School Violence, including by collecting and publishing disaggregated statistics on incidents of school violence, including, where appropriate and in line with human rights standards on data protection, information on the ethnic origin of victims;

(d) Engage with affected communities, including people of African descent, in the design and evaluation of policies aimed at combating racial discrimination in schools.

D. Other recommendations

Ratification of other treaties

35. Bearing in mind the indivisibility of all human rights, the Committee encourages the State Party to consider ratifying those international human rights treaties that it has not yet ratified, in particular treaties with provisions that have direct relevance to communities that may be subjected to racial discrimination, including the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), of the International Labour Organization, as well as the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

Amendment to article 8 of the Convention

36. The Committee recommends that the State Party accept the amendment to article 8 (6) of the Convention adopted on 15 January 1992 at the fourteenth meeting of States Parties to the Convention and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 47/111.

Declaration under article 14 of the Convention

37. The Committee welcomes that the State Party has recognized the competence of the Committee under article 14 of the Convention and encourages it to raise awareness of this procedure and ensure its effective accessibility to potential victims of racial discrimination.

Follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

38. In the light of its general recommendation No. 33 (2009) on follow-up to the Durban Review Conference, the Committee recommends that, when implementing the Convention in its domestic legal order, the State Party give effect to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted in September 2001 by the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, taking into account the outcome document of the Durban Review Conference, held in Geneva in April 2009. The Committee requests that the State Party include in its next periodic report specific information on action plans and other measures taken to implement the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action at the national level.

International Decade for People of African Descent

39. In its resolution 79/193, the General Assembly proclaimed 2025–2034 the Second International Decade for People of African Descent. Also in that resolution, the Assembly decided to extend the programme of activities for the implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent adopted in its resolution 69/16, with a view to ensuring continuing efforts in promoting the respect, protection and fulfilment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of people of African descent. In the light of this development, the Committee recommends that the State Party implement the

programme of activities in collaboration with people of African descent and include in its next periodic report information on the measures adopted in that framework, taking into account the Committee's general recommendation No. 34 (2011) on racial discrimination against people of African descent.

Consultations with civil society

40. The Committee recommends that the State Party continue consulting and increasing its dialogue with civil society organizations working in the area of human rights protection, in particular those working to combat racial discrimination, in connection with the preparation of the next periodic report and in follow-up to the present concluding observations.

Dissemination of information

41. The Committee recommends that the State Party's reports be made readily available and accessible to the public at the time of their submission and that the concluding observations of the Committee with respect to those reports be similarly made available to all government bodies entrusted with the implementation of the Convention, in particular the national mechanism for implementation, reporting and follow-up, and publicized on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the official and other commonly used languages, as appropriate.

Common core document

42. The Committee encourages the State Party to update its common core document, which dates to 2018, in accordance with the harmonized guidelines on reporting under the international human rights treaties, in particular those on the common core document, as adopted at the fifth inter-committee meeting of the human rights treaty bodies, held in June 2006.⁸ In the light of General Assembly resolution 68/268, the Committee urges the State Party to observe the limit of 42,400 words for such documents.

Paragraphs of particular importance

43. The Committee wishes to draw the attention of the State Party to the particular importance of the recommendations contained in paragraphs 10 (training on the Convention), 12 (comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation), 14 (strengthening the Commissioner for Administration and the Protection of Human Rights (Ombudsman)) and 35 (ratification of other treaties) above and requests the State Party to provide detailed information in its next periodic report on the concrete measures taken to implement those recommendations.

Follow-up to concluding observations

44. In accordance with article 9 (1) of the Convention and rule 74 of its rules of procedure, the Committee requests the State Party to provide, within one year of the adoption of the present concluding observations, information on its implementation of the recommendations contained in paragraphs 16 (e) (awareness campaigns promoting tolerance and diversity), 18 (d) (awareness-raising among migrant workers) and 30 (language barriers) above.

Preparation of the next periodic report

45. The Committee recommends that the State Party submit its combined twenty-sixth to thirtieth periodic reports, as a single document, by 4 January 2030, taking into account the reporting guidelines adopted by the Committee during its seventy-first session⁹ and addressing all the points raised in the present concluding

⁸ HRI/GEN/2/Rev.6, chap. I.

⁹ CERD/C/2007/1.

observations. In the light of General Assembly resolution 68/268, the Committee urges the State Party to observe the limit of 21,200 words for periodic reports.
