

Dear CERD,

1. The key challenges and issues of racial discrimination in my country are numerous. Some of the areas where the challenges are most glaring are with respect to mass incarceration in the criminal justice system, police and other state sanctioned murders, state sanctioned barriers to reentry, community displacement and gentrification, inadequate and delayed economic social service supports, unresponsive/culturally inappropriate public school, public school policing/arrests/violence, community policing/raids-open air prisons, environmental racism, unresponsive psychological and emotional response to state and environmental trauma, over-medicating and use of psychotropic medication, failing foster-care systems and child supports, food deserts and limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables, voter disenfranchisement and intimidation, gerrymandering, discriminatory loan practices, discriminatory housing practices and redlining. This is simply scratching the surface and I'm sure I am missing many issues. Most notably given the recent election there is a heightened sense of fear with respect to the criminalization of undocumented individuals, the targeting and intimidation of Arab individuals and the desecration of indigenous (first nation) sacred land, and the increased surveillance/use of state sanctioned violence on activist and organizers protesting police brutality specifically as well as vocal/visible dissenters of any sort generally. There has also been increase in hate speech, hate behavior carried out by private citizens and hate groups. There have been no clear efforts to address the hate speech and practices of white supremacist groups and sympathizers.

a. My work to address the issues within the criminal justice system, policing, and indigenous rights have primarily been through legislative advocacy on the state, federal and city level. However, most efforts have happened on the state level in New York. Additionally, I have participated and helped organize demonstrations, direct actions and protests to raise visibility around these issues. Additionally, I have utilized tactics such as press conference, panels, social media, and elevating the voices of those directly impacted in our push to create legislative change and change in practice.

2. I have engaged CERD by attending the convening in Geneva in August of 2014 and shared testimony as well as participated in a number of organizing calls, conversations and educational opportunities. I also participated in giving a shared testimony around the pertinence of CERD with respect to children.

3. My sense is that through events the general public and advocacy community can be made more aware of CERD and brainstorm creative ways to incorporate the language of CERD in their daily work. From there it would be most useful to have a brainstorming

session to develop actions that could identify the greatest ways to utilize CERD to create on the ground, collective change.

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