

The Tirana Framework for Confronting Intolerance

Background

The spread of hate fueled by prejudice threatens decades of progress in safeguarding human dignity, protecting human rights, and upholding democratic principles. In recent years, anti-rights movements have gained global momentum, stoking intolerance and division. These groups exploit entrenched biases and spread misinformation, weaponizing hate speech to dehumanize their targets and frame various communities as threats to public safety, social order, and national security. By framing certain groups as "others" or various human rights issues as "threats," they rally their base around a common enemy, strengthening in-group loyalty and identity. This divisive rhetoric can distract from serious challenges facing societies and reduce other complex societal challenges to oversimplified narratives. By doing so, they seek to justify discrimination and advance autocratic agendas. Ultimately, this dangerous rhetoric deepens societal divides, undermines democratic norms, and paves the way for authoritarianism—jeopardizing freedoms for all.

HR30 Inaugural Conference Against Hate | *Empower Talk!*

The inaugural HR30 conference, *Empower Talk!* — held from 15-17 January 2025 in Tirana, Albania — provided a vital platform for confronting the pressing issue of hate speech and its impact on perpetuating intolerance and division. This seminal multistakeholder gathering brought together national and international policymakers, parliamentarians, ombudspersons, diplomats, civil society leaders, interfaith actors, scholars, educators, advocates, legal experts, communications experts, and technological innovators. All were united in recognizing hate speech as a challenge requiring urgent and thoughtful responses. The attendees collectively acknowledged the importance of fostering strategies that confront hate speech and promote inclusion, understanding, and respect across diverse communities, in accordance with international human rights standards. By exchanging unique perspectives and expertise, the conference aimed to chart pathways for constructive approaches that address the root causes of discrimination and the divisive rhetoric that perpetuates it.

Against the dynamic backdrop of Tirana—a city recognized for its rich cultural heritage and its spirit of coexistence—the *Empower Talk!* conference created an environment of meaningful collaboration. Participants recognised the value of political commitment at the highest level to combat all forms of discrimination and exclusion. They explored various approaches in depth, including developing innovative policies, implementing educational initiatives, and applying technology to counter harmful narratives. Affirming the value of community-driven solutions, the discussions emphasized solidarity and equipping individuals with the tools to foster positive change in their spheres of influence. The conference outcomes serve as a shared acknowledgment of the need for continued efforts to address hate speech in all its forms. The dialogue and insights exchanged during *Empower Talk!* underscore the importance of cooperation across sectors in building frameworks that advance inclusivity, mutual respect, and equity while addressing institutional discrimination. These efforts foster open dialogue, build stakeholder trust, and showcase the tangible benefits of initiatives that create fair opportunities, strengthen communities, and drive inclusive progress.

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HR30 Forum | Tirana Platform

Outcome Document

Introduction

Freedom of expression is an internationally-guaranteed human right, essential for everyone to seek, receive and impart information and ideas.¹ Upholding this right strengthens democracy and fosters the development of broader human rights. Equally, non-discrimination and equality are fundamental human rights and indispensable principles underpinning the human rights framework.² However, certain forms of expression—such as incitement³ and other forms of hate speech—can pose serious challenges to the rights of others. Advocacy of hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence (incitement) under international law,⁴ endangers lives, entrenches inequality and suppresses the ability of victims and their communities to participate in public life. Other forms of hate speech, including, but not limited to, “any kind of communication in speech, writing or behavior that attacks or uses pejorative or discriminatory language with reference to a person or a group based on their religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, colour, descent, gender, or other identity factor”⁵ can silence marginalized voices, deepen polarization, and erode social cohesion.

Addressing different forms of hate speech demands a delicate balance. Overly broad or vague definitions of hate speech can be misused to suppress legitimate expression, including dissenting opinions, journalistic work, and religious disagreement. Addressing harmful expression must not unduly restrict discourse, peaceful assembly or freedom of association. Ensuring equitable access to the marketplace of ideas requires proactive, inclusive, and human rights-centered approaches. These efforts must promote social justice and belonging and address the root causes of hate, such as systemic discrimination, economic inequality, and historical legacies of exclusion. Together, these actions can protect freedom of expression and ensure that it serves as a tool for inclusion, mutual respect, and equity.

Participants in HR30 Forum’s inaugural conference in Tirana collectively recognized the urgent need to address hate speech and intolerance while safeguarding freedom of expression. With this in mind, participants proposed a focused and actionable pathway to mitigate different forms of hate speech,

¹ See Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

² See Articles 2(1) and Article 26 of the ICCPR.

³ See *infra*.

⁴ See, Article 20(2) of the ICCPR; Article 4 (a), International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD). While these human rights instruments expressly prohibit incitement to hatred on the grounds of racial, national, religious or ethnic origin, the underpinning principle of nondiscrimination means they should be understood to prohibit incitement that targets any of the broader categories protected under international human rights law. See, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, A/74/486 (9 October 2019) para. 9.

⁵ As defined by the United Nations' "Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech."

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address structural discrimination, and ensure that freedom of expression supports inclusivity and equality across all societies.

Key Goals

The attendees of the Tirana conference recognized the following five goals to create meaningful change in addressing hate speech and fostering inclusive expression:

1. **Adopting a Human-Rights-Centered Approach** | All efforts to address various forms of hate speech must be grounded in international human rights standards. Whether by parliamentarians, policymakers, private organizations, or civil society, actions should protect freedom of expression while prioritizing the rights of those most affected, ensuring fair and constructive efforts.
2. **Understanding the Costs of Hate Speech** | Stakeholders should aim to collectively assess and highlight the far-reaching impacts of hate speech on fundamental rights, including freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, equality before the law, and participation in civic life and in the conduct of public affairs. The intersectional impacts of hate speech should be recognized and measured.
3. **Investing in Research and Proven Solutions** | Dedicated resources must be allocated to scaling research into the effectiveness of different interventions to address different forms of hate speech and the root causes of hate. This includes ensuring research centres on the experiences of marginalized groups and identifying effective interventions, from education programmes to legal and institutional reforms.
4. **Tackling Structural Inequities and Promoting Belonging** | Combatting hate speech requires promoting belonging through addressing broader societal inequalities, such as entrenched discrimination, economic inequality, and the lingering effects of historical injustices.
5. **Challenging Hate with Targeted Efforts** | Hate directed at individuals or groups based on their identity undermines fundamental human rights and can result in gross abuse and mass atrocities. Hateful actions and narratives deepen societal divides, silence voices, and perpetuate discrimination that affects both targeted individuals and broader communities. Addressing hate — including Antisemitism, Islamophobia/anti-Muslim hate, prejudice against Christian minorities and other religious and belief minorities, xenophobia, racism, sexism, and other pervasive forms of discriminatory intolerance — requires unified efforts across governments, civil society, and other sectors to identify, challenge, and reduce the spread of hate. These initiatives must focus on a whole-of-society approach to mitigating harm, restoring trust in affected communities, and advancing universal human rights standards that protect everyone.

Key Actions We Urge

To achieve these goals we urge governments, private sector actors, and civil society organizations to take the following actions:

1. **Demonstrate Political Commitment** | Active political commitment to combat hate is foundational. Governments should redouble efforts to implement the Action Plan outlined in UN Human Rights Council resolution 16/18 ([A/HRC/RES/16/18](#)), the Rabat Plan of Action ([A/HRC/22/17/Add.4](#), appendix) and the guidance offered by the [UN Strategy and Action Plan on Hate Speech](#). Governments are encouraged to

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report on best practices and lessons learned in implementing these strategies. Local authorities have a responsibility to champion these efforts at the local level. States are also urged to implement the recommendations of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, including reports contained in the United Nations document nos. [A/HRC/25/58](#), [A/74/358](#), [A/HRC/46/30](#) and [A/HRC/55/47](#), which outline effective, human rights-compliant strategies to counter hatred.

2. **Build Multi-Sector Alliances** | Collaboration is key. Efforts to combat intolerance—including Antisemitism, Islamophobia/anti-Muslim hate, prejudice against Christian minorities and other religious and belief minorities, xenophobia, racism, sexism, and other pervasive forms of discriminatory intolerance—must be collaborative. Joined up action by public officials, multilateral bodies, community leaders, faith-based actors, corporations, media organizations, and civic groups can be crucial to promote actions that reduce hate and promote inclusion.
3. **Enhance Monitoring and Reporting Systems** | Effective monitoring systems must document the immediate impacts of hate speech and its long-term consequences on victims and communities. This includes tracking its effects on democratic engagement, free expression and social cohesion.
4. **Expand Research and Education Efforts** | Invest in research to explore which tools and responses are most effective in addressing hate speech, both online and offline. This includes assessing the role of education, counter-speech, emerging technologies, and legal mechanisms. Existing frameworks, such as the [Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights](#) and guidance offered by UNESCO,⁶ should be included in this assessment. Digital solutions, such as AI content moderation and curation tools, must be designed to safeguard human rights.
5. **Support Victims and Advocate for Accountability** | Support services for those affected by hate speech must be prioritized. Governments and civil society should provide accessible reporting systems, protect victims, and ensure perpetrators face meaningful accountability.
6. **Increase Accountability of Technology Platforms** | Technology and social media companies must establish clear, transparent mechanisms to identify and address hate speech while respecting free expression. This includes user-friendly reporting tools, transparent content moderation policies and practices aligned with international standards, effective appeals mechanisms, redress for harms and ethical AI systems.
7. **Take a Proactive Stand Against Hate** | A proactive approach increases preparedness and resilience against hate. States should formulate national action plans in consultation with stakeholders to combat all forms of hate, appoint dedicated National Coordinators and taskforces, and ensure a consistent and well-resourced approach to reducing systemic hate.

Moving Forward

Participants of the HR30 Tirana Platform conference called for long-term commitments that sustain collaboration, emphasizing capacity building for grassroots organizations and communities to propel their

⁶ See <https://www.unesco.org/en/countering-hate-speech>

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efforts against all forms of hate and intolerance, the discrimination they engender, and the tools used to perpetuate them.

This includes providing essential resources, training in advocacy and digital tools, and fostering networks that enhance their ability to monitor and counter hate speech. By equipping local groups with education, financial support, and platforms for dialogue, societies ensure these organizations can play a pivotal role in challenging harmful narratives, promoting inclusivity, and building resilient, cohesive communities rooted in mutual respect and equality. They advocated establishing a global network to share knowledge, provide training, and engage in collaborative actions. Focusing on inclusive leadership, participants emphasized that freedom of expression and other human rights can only be protected and strengthened worldwide through coordinated, resilient, and inclusive strategies.

The HR30 Forum | The HR30 Forum is a collaborative initiative that uses a human rights-centered approach and addresses all forms of hate speech. It promotes fundamental human rights to build more inclusive, equitable, and respectful societies. It employs strategies such as advocacy to amplify voices against hate, education to foster awareness and understanding, policy development to create frameworks that counter hate speech, prevent discrimination, promote accountability, and capacity-building of all actors to combat hate. The Forum also facilitates knowledge-sharing and collective action through international cooperation, ensuring no community is left behind. By prioritizing human rights, the HR30 Forum works to protect marginalized groups, strengthen social cohesion, and counter the divisive impacts of hate speech on a global scale.

The Tirana Framework and Platform | The Tirana Framework and Platform, a pivotal outcome of the HR30 inaugural conference, Empower Talk!, held in January 2025 in the dynamic city of Tirana, Albania, embodies the collective commitment of attendees to combatting hate speech as a vehicle for spreading intolerance and division. Designed as a catalyst for change, the Platform highlights HR30's human rights-centered, multistakeholder approach by fostering inclusive partnerships among governments, civil society organizations (CSOs), educational institutions, and private enterprises. It emphasizes the importance of joint action in addressing the root causes of hate, evaluating interventions to address "hate speech," and advancing policy reforms and community-driven initiatives. As a human rights-centred platform, the Tirana Framework serves as both a symbol and a tool for uniting diverse stakeholders under a shared vision of equality, mutual respect, and societal harmony.
