



Key Recommendations to Ireland - 53rd Session of the Universal Periodic Review

By the Irish Network Against Racism (INAR) and the Coalition of Stakeholders Against Racism¹

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Themes Addressed:

Racism, Racial Discrimination, Hate Crime, Right to Education, Labour Rights, Migrants, Right to Housing

Summary of Key Issues from Previous Reviews

Since its last UPR cycle, Ireland has been celebrated for its progress on equality and inclusion. Yet serious challenges persist due to **the non-enactment of bills** and **failure to implement important policy recommendations**. Recent UPR working group reports highlighted and urged Ireland to address **increased racist hate speech** aimed at Travellers, Roma, Muslims, refugees, asylum seekers, Black people, and migrants alongside **ineffective legislation** addressing the issue.

Concerns were also raised regarding **racial profiling** by An Garda Síochána (Irish police), **high unemployment rates among Travellers and Roma**, **homelessness** and **educational disparities**. It was strongly recommended that Ireland fully integrate the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) provisions into domestic law.

National Framework

- In 2023, Ireland adopted its second National Action Plan Against Racism (2023-2027).
- In 2024, a Special Rapporteur on Racial Equality and Racism and an Anti-Racism Advisory Group were appointed. The Special Rapporteur's annual implementation report highlighted poor progress on the NAPAR.
- In 2024, the Criminal Justice (Hate Offences) Act was enacted; however, it did not include provisions against extreme hate speech.
- In 2026, the long-overdue National Equality Data Strategy was published; however, its administrative delay continues to leave many racially minoritised groups statistically invisible, preventing evidence-based policymaking.

Challenges	Impact
Policing of racially minoritised people	In Ireland, the absence of ethnicity-disaggregated data means that deaths of racially minoritised people in custody are only known through community or media coverage. High-profile cases of deaths in police and private security custody , such as the deaths of George Nkencho , Mauricio Mota de Camargo and, more recently, Yves Sakila , show the consequences of excessive or lethal force and highlight gaps in accountability and reporting. Despite repeated calls from UNCERD and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), the State has not enacted legislation explicitly prohibiting racial profiling in Ireland, leaving racially minoritised communities vulnerable to a disproportionate use of excessive force

¹ This joint submission is made by the Irish Network Against Racism (INAR) and a coalition of stakeholders against racism, drawn from INAR membership, representing the full range of identities, including Black people, Muslims, Travellers, Roma, Asylum Seekers and Migrants. Stakeholders include:

AkiDwA, Amal Women Ireland, Bahai Office of Public Affairs, Black and Irish, Cairde, Circle Voluntary Housing Association, Comhlamh, Cooking for Freedom, Cultúr Migrants Centre, Doras, Dublin City Interfaith Forum, Dublin South City Partnership, Empower CLG, Fingal, Esangweni Men's Network, Grandmothers Against Racism, Immigrant Council of Ireland, Insaka Ireland All Africa Youth and Cultural Movement, International Community Dynamics CLG, Irish Internet Hotline, Irish Traveller Movement (ITM), Islamic Foundation of Ireland, Lucy Michael Research and Consultancy, Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI), National Traveller MABS, National Traveller Women's Forum (NTWF), National Women's Council (NWC) Ireland, National Youth Council Ireland (NYCI), School Street Family Resource Centre T/A Liberties, Inchicore Rialto Training Centre, Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre, Sport Against Racism Ireland (SARI), Technological University Dublin (TU Dublin), Waterford New Communities Network

	by public and private policing bodies. ²
Hate Crime, Hate Speech & Hate Organising	The rise in online hate speech, far-right organising and discourse in Ireland is a serious concern. Incitement to hatred on social media often results in violence towards racially minoritised people. The Criminal Justice (Hate Offences) Act 2024, although a milestone, was enacted omitting crucial provisions to curb extreme hate speech, leaving racially minoritised communities without adequate legal protection. The State's reservation on Article 4 of CERD also leaves room for incitement to racist discrimination or violence, and the propagation of ideas of racial superiority.
National Action Plan Against Racism (NAPAR)	Based on the Special Rapporteur's implementation report, Ireland's 2023-2027 NAPAR overall has weak resourcing, implementation, and accountability, with racism being treated as a low priority by the State. Some key issues are a weak ethnic data infrastructure, the sharp rise in extreme hate speech towards racially minoritised people, and inconsistent government departmental engagement. Although an Advisory Group on Racial Equality and Racism oversees NAPAR implementation, our Coalition believes that only a body with the restored functions of the former National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI) will adequately address these issues. The Irish government has also endorsed the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism, raising concerns regarding its impacts on civic space, freedom of expression and human rights advocacy. The UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism has warned against the endorsement of this definition, which now not only undermines the role of the Special Rapporteur and Advisory group but the work of the NAPAR itself.
Right to Housing and Accommodation	The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) has also raised numerous concerns for International Protection Applicants (IPAs) in direct provision centres. From the government's failure to end Direct Provision in 2024 to its ambitious accommodation strategy for IPAs, many IPAs are still left living in homelessness and a lack of access to basic services. Irish Travellers and Roma continue to face systemic barriers in accessing adequate and culturally appropriate accommodation, with the CESCR finding Ireland in violation of its obligations concerning Traveller accommodation.³
Racism in Education	Racially minoritised students in Ireland from primary education right up to third-level education still face persistent barriers to access and equal treatment. ⁴ Despite the launch of the national Traveller and Roma Education Strategy (TRES), stakeholders of representative communities such as Pavee Point highlight that TRES requires a much stronger focus on anti-Traveller and anti-Roma racism .
Racism in the Labour Market and Workplace	Racialised communities continue to face racial discrimination in recruitment, workplace treatment, and lack of recognition of foreign qualifications and experience, contributing to issues like deskilling, underemployment, and unemployment. Research showed the employment rate of Travellers to be approximately 7.5 times higher than the national average at 61%.⁵ Research from FRA also highlights the intersectional nature of labour market discrimination, finding that Muslim women, particularly those who wear visible religious dress, face a "triple penalty" of discrimination based on gender, religion and ethnicity.⁶

² INAR's [policing study](#) presents the most detailed evidence to date of the negative experiences of policing among people of African Descent and Brazilian communities including accounts of traumatic stop-and-search incidents, including strip searches and wrongful arrests, with long-lasting psychological effects and impacts on employment, study, and family life.

³ See [CESCR's 2024 Concluding Observations](#) on the fourth periodic report on Ireland.

⁴ See the Higher Education Authority's Report, [Race Equality in the Higher Education Sector](#)

⁵ See [key statistics on 2022 Census](#) from the Irish National Organisation of the the Unemployed

⁶ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), 2024. [Being Muslim in the EU - Experiences of Muslims](#)

Priority Recommendations

- **Implement NAPAR Action 1.5** to “eliminate any policing practices targeting those experiencing racism.” This requires **adopting a comprehensive definition of racial profiling** (aligned with CERD General Recommendation No. 36), **enshrining its prohibition in law**.
- Urgently **review the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act, 1989**, and strengthen hate speech legislation. New or revised legislation should **address extreme hate speech** in all forms of communication, particularly online.⁷
- Develop and implement a comprehensive human rights-based **National Action Plan Against Hate** with the engagement of minoritised communities. It should work to investigate **the root causes of hate** with **measures to address online hate**
- **Withdraw reservation on Article 4** of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), allowing authorities to introduce and enforce measures to combat hate organising and Holocaust denial.
- **Restore the full functions of the former NCCRI to an adequately resourced, empowered, and independent body** to oversee and monitor racism in Ireland and the implementation of the NAPAR.
- **Remove the endorsement of the IHRA working definition of antisemitism** and instead implement ECRI’s General Recommendation No. 9 on preventing and combating antisemitism.

Recommendations

- Establish a **National Traveller and Roma Accommodation Authority** to oversee the delivery of Traveller and Roma accommodation and ensure compliance with previous legislation.
- Introduce and enforce mechanisms to **address racial discrimination in housing**, including penalties for private landlords failing to give equal access to racially minoritised people and those under the Housing Assistance Payment Scheme.
- Communicate, implement and **align all anti-racism policies with the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty** across all levels of education.
- **Fully implement and resource the TRES** to adequately address inequalities in education faced by the Traveller and Roma communities.
- **Collect, analyse and publish disaggregated data** on labour market participation by ethnicity and religion, and conduct systemic equality audits to **monitor pay gaps by ethnicity**.
- Include measures to ensure that interview panels for public sector roles are diverse and well-trained in anti-racism. This should be coupled with measures to mitigate bias throughout recruitment processes, such as anonymised CVs and **recognition of international qualifications**.

⁷ CERD [general recommendation no. 35](#) on combatting hate speech