1. Committee Introduction

The UNHRC, the United Nations Human Rights Council is a committee deals with human rights problem all around the world. The council is made up of 47 the UN (United Nations) member states which are elected by the UN General Assembly. The UNHRC was created on 15 March 2006 by resolution 60/251. The council had its first session from 19 to 30 June 2006 and one year later, it adopted its “Institution-building package” to guide its work and set up its procedures and mechanisms. It is not limited to just human rights but to any other problems even if it is merely related to human rights. Also, the jobs held in this committee could be divided into 4 parts, first is mainstreaming human rights. Second is having partnerships with other committees which can help human rights problem. Thirdly, this committee is doing standard-setting and monitoring. Lastly, about implementation on the ground which can realistically help those people whose human rights are now discriminated by other people.

The UNHRC is currently dealing with the problem of Israeli-Palestinian conflict and rights in Burma, Guinea, North Korea, Côte d'Ivoire, Kyrgyzstan, Syria, Libya, Iran, and Sri Lanka. Also, it is dealing with lots of human rights problem connected with many other different parts. The UNHRC also mainstreams human rights. They encourage respect for human rights for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion as it is on the United Nations Charter, basic goals of the UNHRC.

It also deals with the important task of mainstreaming human rights into the United Nations system, and work with Government, society, national human rights institutions and other United Nations entities and international organizations like the International Labour Organization, the Office of High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Children’s Fund, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the International Criminal Court, specialized criminal tribunals for Yugoslavia and for Rwanda built by the Security Council, and the World Bank to promote and protect human rights.

2. Background Knowledge

2-1. Racial Discrimination

In regards to socio-political aspects, combating racism has been a crucial issue. Prior to understanding the sources and consequences of racist acts, it is important to grasp the meaning of racial discrimination. Racial discrimination is a doctrine that justifies racial contempt and persecution because there is a genetic superiority and inferiority between races. “It occurs on the grounds of race, color, descent or national or ethnic origin. Victims are suffering aggravated forms of discrimination based on other related grounds such as sex, language, religion, property or another status.” (Chapter VII of the report of the Conference (A/CONF.189/12 and Corr.1))

2-2. Major Factors of Racial Discrimination

The primary factor of racial discrimination is ‘ethnocentrism’. It is the tendency to evaluate others' cultures by one's own cultural norms and values. In a broader view, this also encompasses a suspicion of foreigners and exclusion of them other than the ethnicity of home countries. Ethnocentrism strongly forms a racial hierarchy, which is a classification of human beings into hierarchical categories. Since the hierarchical cultural mindset usually encourages
national people who usually think that they are in the top cultural position to undermine the rest of the cultures other than their native culture. What makes the matter worse, it is obvious that several cultures are still having their ethnocentric tendencies nowadays such as People’s Republic of China, even if globalization has brought about multi-cultural, ethnic society. Therefore, ethnocentrism is one of engines of racial discrimination.

Moreover, according to Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA), racial superiority perception is the one cause of racism. This had been developed from the imperial era. During the 17th and 18th centuries, plenty of planners in colonial countries, especially European countries believed themselves superior to the indigenous people. They used to rationalize dominating the native people or despoiling land’s properties away. The colonists at that time had utilized a principle of white supremacy. They justified they deserved their dominating position and the indigenous land’s resources just because they were supposedly more 'civilized' than native peoples. This behavior can also explain the cultural conflicts so as to take over their social status, power, and possessions. Privileged groups are invested in seeing that no competition for resources arises from minority groups. The power groups or nations are prepared to resort to extreme acts of violence against others for pursuing their interests.

2-3. The Correlation between Racial Discrimination and Democracy

Prior to moving on to the agenda, understanding the interrelations between racial discrimination and democracy is needed. Democracy is a form of politics in which people exercise their rights at the same time as they have power. It seeks to respectfully embrace differences in terms of ethnic, racial, religious, political or other aspects. It aims at enabling all individuals to fully realize their potential and to extend the full and equal protection of the State to all. It results in calling for an active respect for the other, every other.

On the other hand, when it comes to racism, it conflicts with the main concepts and rules of democracy. To take an example of election process, it ought to encompass continuous participation in the political process by the people. However racism and racial discrimination clearly restrict opportunities for political participation and the protection of minorities and other groups. A society that does not fully consider the equal right of all individuals to take part in public life and decision making process is not essentially a democratic society.

There are following declarations that set out the fundamental global standard for equality and non-discrimination. The first proclamation is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights signed in 1948. It declared that “Everyone is entitled to all rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinions, national or social origin, property, birth or another status”. Moreover, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights signed on 19th December 1966, guarantees freedom of opinion and expression and provides guidance on the prohibition of “any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence”.

Nonetheless, up to this date, there are still various forms of oppression and racism in different parts of the world. Particularly the dominant problem is the one that people who are constrained in the process of political participation due to racial and ethnic differences. This is certainly incompatible with democracy. In order for all humans to enjoy the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in practice, step-by-step and binding measures are needed at an international level against racism.

UNHRC reported two suggestions in the panel discussion regarding the potential acts of racism. First, it proposed that it is imperative for political parties, platforms and organizations
to take responsibility in taking decisive action against racist discourse. In order to achieve this, it is needed to develop internal disciplinary approaches against public actions that promote racism. It is also necessary that public authorities and elected governmental officials should openly voice out against discrimination and intolerance in all fields. All racial, national and ethnic groups should be equally respected in every local and national institution.

3. Topics of Discussion

3-1. Threats of Modern Racism on Democracy

The modern racism, especially based upon ethnocentrism, has ethnicity centered groups or political parties who misuse the essence of cultural relativism and draw back from the all-encompassing values of democracy. Rather than treating people equally in the basis of rule of law, ethnicity centered political commentators justify the need for separating rules for different groups. These groups self-interestedly pursue special treatments of their respective groups at the cost of the rights of others.

Furthermore, the ethnocentric political groups might negatively influence on the development of the universal values of democracy like freedom of speech and equality before the law in spite of cultural differences. While the universal values of democracy consider human dignity as the central element, political tribalism considers ethnic background as the most crucial determinant of one’s humanness. This also will lead to inequality, persisting assaults, and loss of unity. Groups and individuals who condemn the views of other groups will be treated as racists and intolerant. They will be harshly criticized for bigotry, and ultimately their freedom of speech will be oppressed.

3-2. Case Studies

There are countries that violate the values of democracy in the name of racism. The first case to discuss is the ‘zero-intolerance’ immigration policy in the United States. “When somebody comes in, we must immediately bring them back from where they came.” This is what Trump declared towards immigrants attempting to enter the U.S. His policy aims to block brown immigrants and other people of color from the thought that we can be citizens, and he tries to split justice from democracy to rationalize his unacceptable actions. Because of his policies, countless people were prevented from immigrating to the United States, thereby not even being given the right to participate in political decision-making. Likewise, Trump’s hard and fast decision and connivance of the Constitution has resulted in a political assault on brown immigrants, people of color, and democracy. Such racist acts by the U.S., a multiracial and multicultural nation, go against the current of the times.

The second case is South Korea’s intolerant behavior towards outsiders. The typical example is the acceptance of Yemen refugees by a small number. According to the U.N. refugee agency's data, the average refugee recognition rate in 190 countries in the world has been 29.9 percent in the last 18 years (2000-2017), and the protection rate is 44.2 percent. On the other hand, Korea's recognition rate stands at 3.5 percent, ranking 35th among OECD countries. A more recent dreadful example occurred in a bar in Itaewon of Seoul, in June 2017, rejecting an Indian customer. “No Indians,” “It is a rule. No Kazakhstan, no Pakistan, no Mongolia, no Saudi Arabia and no Egypt.” For decades, Korean education system taught the idea of a single-blooded nation and the concept of ‘danil minjok’ in Korean. This kind of racial purity accelerated national unity. Only after 2007, when the United Nations urged South Korea to stop this racist concept, did the paradigm of education shift. In recent days the government has also implemented multiculturalism which is called
damunhwa. But there is a limitation that there would still be a little tolerance for other sorts
of foreigners trying to stay here in a long period because damunhwa paradigm sets limits on
foreigners marrying South Korean citizens. All these cases show how much the racist acts
are contributing to preventing individuals from belonging to a country and gaining the
political rights they deserve as a nation's people.

4. Previous Actions

4-1. The Preamble of the International Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of
Racial Discrimination

This preamble states that “any doctrine of superiority based on racial differentiation is
scientifically false, morally condemnable, socially unjust and dangerous, and that there is no
justification for racial discrimination, in theory or in practice, anywhere.”

Plus, according to article 4 of the International Convention, it says state parties should
denounce all propagandas based on notions of superiority of one race or group of persons of
one color or ethnic origin, or which try to justify racial discrimination in any form. Also they
should make a start to implement immediate approaches designed to get rid of all acts of such
discrimination.

4-2. The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA)

DDPA was adopted at the 2001 World Conference against Racism (WCAR) in Durban,
South Africa. It is a comprehensive document that suggests specific measures to combat
racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. The DDPA embodies the
firm commitment of the international community to tackle racism, racial discrimination,
xenophobia and related intolerance at the national, regional and international level. Although
the DDPA is not legally binding, it has a strong moral value and serves as a basis of advocacy
efforts worldwide. The 2009 Durban Review Conference also addressed these issues.
Paragraph 85 of DDPA criticizes political platforms and organizations based on racism and
theories of racial superiority as incompatible with democracy and transparent governance.

4-3. HRC Resolution 29/20

The intersessional high-level panel discussion was held in April of 2019 by UNHRC,
under the title of the incompatibility between democracy and racism: identifying challenges
and good practices. UNHRC has stressed that democracy, transparent and participatory
governance responsive to the needs of the people, and respect for human rights with freedoms
are necessary for the effective prevention of racism.

HRC Resolution 29/20 also emphasized the essential role of education in eradicating
racial and other prejudices. Human rights education and raising awareness can play an
important role to promote respect for human rights, including the equality of all. This is not
limited to schools, but also incorporates teachers, and members of political parties. States
ought to take all opportunities to counter the diffusion of ideas based on racial supremacy or
hatred and to encourage the values of equality, non-discrimination, diversity and democracy.
5. Possible Actions & Solutions

5-1. Building trust in the Council proceeding with developing effective Council responses on emerging human rights violations issues

Ever since the issue of racism has broken out, the UN Human Rights Council has been contributing to take preemptive actions by making efforts of various implementations. Notwithstanding, the council stated the current situation that human rights violation occurs on a daily basis and democracy is being shattered by the populist speeches that manipulate the citizens and let them suffer in fears, and no country immune. In this sense, the council suggested that ‘trust-building process’ is as important as putting it into practice to solve the problem. To build trust, they mentioned that sufficient time and space are needed within the Council for discussing issues related to follow-up and implementation, such as troubles being faced, lessons that have been acquired and achievements made.

As the key role of UNHRC is to promote universal respect for the protection of all human rights and fundamental freedom, the Council has a duty to give attention to new human rights trends, consider emerging issues and further develop effective actions possible. The Council has numerous mechanisms to assist it in identifying and addressing emerging issues. For example, the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee is a crucial body to bring to the Council’s focus on new human rights trends and provide advice on how the Council can effectively respond to those trends and upcoming issues. The Council’s Special Procedures also play an essential job by sounding the alarm on issues related to the theme as well as worrying developments in nation circumstances.

5-2. Request members of the U.N. Human Rights Council to consider the method and direction of setting and elaborating the national democratic equality index, based on the EIU Democracy Index

The EIU Democracy Index provides brief information of the state of world democracy for 165 independent states and two territories. The Democracy Index consists of five categories: electoral process and pluralism, civil liberties, the functioning of government, political participation and political culture. Based on their scores on 60 indicators within these categories, every nation is classified as one of four types of regime: full democracy, flawed democracy, hybrid regime and authoritarian regimes.

The measurement above is appropriate to scrutinize the various situations in which democracy is being invaded in modern society. However, in order to improve the condition where racism is constrained by individual participation in democratic politics, it is necessary to further refine the way democratic equality is set. Thus, the UN Human Rights Council is highly recommended to consider the additional methods or future plans in concretizing the standard of national democratic equality level, based upon the EIU Democracy Index.
6. Definition of Keywords

Racism
Racism is a principle that justifies racial contempt, persecution, discrimination, etc. It is the task of imposing social, economic, and legal inequalities on certain races because of racial prejudice.

Democracy
Democracy is a form of politics in which people exercise their rights at the same time as they have power, or an idea which aims that politics.

Ethnocentrism
Ethnocentrism is the tendency to evaluate others' cultures by one's own cultural norms and values. This includes a suspicion of outsiders and exclusion of people other than the ethnicity of home countries.

Racial hierarchy
Racial hierarchy is a classification of human beings into categories, each category attributed with certain cultural, ethnic and behavioral characteristics.

White superiority
The attitude which people who have the white race in society think they are better than other races.

7. Related Organizations and Documents

UN Human Rights Council’s Stances to Human Rights Issue
In March 11, 2019, there was a 40th session of the Human Rights Council. Under the theme of ‘the Mitigation and countering of rising nationalist populism and extreme supremacist ideologies in commemoration of the International Day for the elimination of racial discrimination’, there was an important remark by UN High Commissioner of Human Rights Michelle Bachelet.

“We need to openly condemn all messages – especially political messages or discourses – which disseminate ideas based on racial superiority or hatred, or which incite racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. As the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the DDPA recommended in 2012, educational programmes should address the negative stereotypes that continue to result from colonialism and other forms of historical injustice.

The role of digital and social media in whipping up hate speech means that both governments and companies need to take careful and principled action to protect fundamental rights online. Universally agreed human rights provide essential guidance on problems that transcend borders and cultures, particularly for situations, where overbroad approaches could undermine free expression, while failure to act endangers other rights.”
8. Critical Questions

A. Who (individuals, groups, societies) are the most vulnerable to be injured by racial discrimination and how would the racist acts give impact on democratic rights of relevant individuals, societies and states?

B. What is the connection between a democratic value and racism, and why are these two incompatible?

C. What specific and additional actions should be taken by international bodies (such as the United Nations) and local community respectively, in order to eradicate problems that have arose from racism and further protect human basic rights in terms of decision-making process within certain countries?
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