



**OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR  
HUMAN RIGHTS**



**Human rights of migrants**

**Commission on Human Rights Resolution: 2004/53**

*The Commission on Human Rights,*

*Reaffirming* the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which proclaims that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set out therein, without distinction of any kind, in particular as to race, colour or national origin,

*Recalling* its resolution 2003/46 of 23 April 2003 and taking note of General Assembly resolution 58/190 of 22 December 2003,

*Considering* that every State party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights must ensure to all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction the rights recognized in the Covenant,

*Bearing in mind* that every State party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has undertaken to guarantee the exercise of all rights enunciated in that Covenant without discrimination of any kind, including in particular on the basis of national origin,

*Reaffirming* the provisions concerning migrants adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights, the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women,

*Recalling* the renewed commitment made in the United Nations Millennium Declaration to take measures to ensure respect for and protection of the human rights of migrants, migrant workers and their families, to eliminate the increasing acts of racism and xenophobia in all societies and to promote greater harmony and tolerance,

*Welcoming* the provisions on the human rights of migrants contained in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action adopted in September 2001 by the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (A/CONF.189/12 and Corr.1), and expressing its satisfaction at the important recommendations made for the development of international and national strategies for the protection of migrants and for the design of migration policies that fully respect the human rights of migrants and members of their families,

*Recalling* General Assembly resolution 40/144 of 13 December 1985, by which it approved the Declaration on the Human Rights of Individuals Who are not Nationals of the Country in which They Live,

*Aware* of the increasing number of migrants worldwide,

*Bearing in mind* the situation of vulnerability in which migrants frequently find themselves, owing, inter alia, to their absence from their State of origin and to the difficulties

they encounter because of differences of language, custom and culture, as well as the economic and social difficulties and obstacles to the return of migrants, especially for those who are undocumented or in an irregular migratory situation, to their States of origin,

*Deeply concerned* at the manifestations of violence, racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance and inhuman and degrading treatment against migrants, especially women and children, in different parts of the world,

*Recognizing* the positive contributions that migrants frequently make, including through their eventual integration into their host society, and the efforts that some host countries undertake to integrate migrants and their families,

*Highlighting* the importance of creating conditions that favour greater harmony, tolerance and respect between migrants and the rest of society in the countries in which they find themselves, in order to eliminate manifestations of racism and xenophobia against migrants and members of their families,

*Welcoming* the active role played by governmental and non-governmental organizations in combating racism and xenophobia and assisting individual victims of racist acts, including migrant victims,

*Recalling* the judgment of the International Court of Justice of 27 June 2001 and of Advisory Opinion OC-16/99, issued by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights on 1 October 1999 on the right to information on consular assistance in the framework of the guarantees of the due process of law, in the case of foreign nationals detained by the authorities of a receiving State,

*Taking note* of the judgment of the International Court of Justice of 31 March 2004 in the *Avena and Other Mexican Nationals* case (Mexico v. United States of America),

*Bearing in mind* the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants contained in its resolution 1999/44 of 27 April 1999,

*Encouraged* by the increasing interest of the international community in the effective and full protection of the human rights of all migrants, and underlining the need to make further efforts to ensure respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants,

*Taking note* of Advisory Opinion OC-18/03, issued by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights on 17 September 2003, on the juridical situation and rights of undocumented migrants,

*Resolved* to ensure respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants,

1. *Strongly condemns* the manifestations and acts of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance against migrants and the stereotypes often applied to them and urges States to apply the existing laws, when xenophobic or intolerant acts, or manifestations or expressions against migrants occur, in order to eradicate impunity for those who commit xenophobic and racist acts;

2. *Also strongly condemns* all forms of racial discrimination and xenophobia related to access to employment, vocational training, housing, schooling, health services and social services, as well as services intended for use by the public;

3. *Requests* all States, in conformity with national legislation and applicable international legal instruments to which they are party, firmly to prosecute violations of labour law with regard to migrant workers' conditions of work, inter alia those related to their remuneration and conditions of health and safety at work;

4. *Also requests* States effectively to promote and protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants, especially those of women and children, regardless of their migratory condition, in conformity with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the international instruments to which they are party, which may include the International Covenants on Human Rights, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and other relevant human rights instruments, norms and standards;

5. *Calls upon* States to implement fully the commitments and recommendations relating to the promotion and protection of the human rights of migrants contained in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action through, inter alia, the adoption of national plans of action as recommended by the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance;

6. *Also calls upon* all States to consider reviewing and, where necessary, revising immigration policies with a view to eliminating all discriminatory practices against migrants and their families and to provide specialized training for government policy-making and law enforcement, migration and other concerned officials, including in cooperation with non-governmental organizations and civil society, thus underlining the importance of effective action to create conditions that foster greater harmony and tolerance within societies;

7. *Reaffirms emphatically* the duty of States parties to ensure full respect for and observance of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, particularly with regard to the right of foreign nationals, regardless of their immigration status, to communicate with a consular official of their own State in the case of detention, and the obligation of the State in whose territory the detention occurs to inform the foreign national of that right;

8. *Urges* all States to adopt effective measures to put an end to the arbitrary arrest and detention of migrants, including by individuals or groups;

9. *Encourages* States that have not yet done so to enact domestic legislation and to take further effective measures to combat international trafficking and smuggling of migrants, which should take into account, in particular, trafficking and smuggling that endanger the lives of migrants or entail different forms of servitude or exploitation, such as any form of debt bondage, slavery and sexual exploitation or forced labour, and also encourages them to strengthen international cooperation to combat such trafficking and smuggling;

10. *Calls upon* States to observe national legislation and applicable international legal instruments to which they are party, when enacting national security legislation measures, in order to respect the human rights of migrants;

11. *Also calls upon* States to protect all human rights of migrant children, particularly unaccompanied migrant children, ensuring that the best interests of the children are a primary consideration, and underlines the importance of reuniting them with their parents, when possible, and encourages the relevant United Nations bodies, within the framework of their respective mandates, to pay special attention to the conditions of migrant children in all States and, where necessary, to put forward recommendations to strengthen their protection;

12. *Requests* States to adopt concrete measures in order to prevent the violation of the human rights of migrants while in transit, including in ports and airports and at borders and migration checkpoints, to train public officials who work in those facilities and in border areas to treat migrants and their families respectfully and in accordance with the law, and to prosecute, in conformity with applicable law, any act of violation of the human rights of migrants and their families - inter alia arbitrary detention, torture and violations of the right to life, including extrajudicial executions - during their transit from their country of origin to the country of destination and vice versa, including their transit through national borders;

13. *Encourages* all States to remove unlawful obstacles that may prevent the safe, unrestricted and expeditious transfer of earnings, assets and pensions of migrants to their country of origin or to any other countries, in conformity with applicable legislation, and to consider, as appropriate, measures to solve other problems that may impede such transfers;

14. *Calls upon* States to facilitate family reunification in an expeditious and effective manner, with due regard to applicable laws, as such reunification has a positive effect on the integration of migrants;

15. *Welcomes* immigration programmes adopted by some countries that allow migrants to integrate fully into the host countries, facilitate family reunification and promote a harmonious and tolerant environment, and encourages States to consider the possibility of adopting these types of programmes;

16. *Encourages* States to consider participating in international and regional dialogues on migration that include sending and receiving countries, as well as countries of transit, and invites them to consider negotiating bilateral and regional agreements on migrant workers in the framework of applicable human rights law and designing and implementing programmes with States of other regions to protect the rights of migrants;

17. *Encourages* States of origin to promote and protect the human rights of those families of migrant workers which remain in the countries of origin, paying particular attention to children and adolescents whose parents have emigrated, and encourages international organizations to consider supporting States in this regard;

18. *Encourages* States, in cooperation with non-governmental organizations, to undertake information campaigns aimed at clarifying opportunities, limitations and rights in the event of migration, so as to enable everyone, in particular women, to make informed decisions and to prevent them from becoming victims of trafficking and utilizing dangerous means of access that put their lives and physical integrity at risk;

19. *Takes note with appreciation* of the fifth report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants (E/CN.4/2004/76 and Add.1-4) and her interim report to the General Assembly (see A/58/275), both submitted pursuant to Commission resolution 2003/46, especially regarding the work she has undertaken, including on the aspect of migrant domestic workers, and takes note of her observations and recommendations;

20. *Encourages* the Special Rapporteur to continue to examine ways and means of overcoming existing obstacles to the full and effective protection of the human rights of persons belonging to this large vulnerable group, including obstacles to and difficulties for the return of migrants who are undocumented or in an irregular situation, in conformity with her mandate as contained in Commission resolution 1999/44;

21. *Requests* the Special Rapporteur, in carrying out her mandate and within the framework of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and all other international human rights instruments, to request, receive and exchange information on violations of the human rights of migrants, wherever they may occur, from Governments, treaty bodies, specialized agencies and the special mechanisms of the Commission, as well as from intergovernmental organizations, other competent organizations of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations, including migrants' organizations, and to respond effectively to such information;

22. *Requests* all relevant mechanisms to cooperate with the Special Rapporteur;

23. *Requests* the Special Rapporteur, as part of her activities, to continue her programme of visits, which contribute to improving the protection afforded to the human rights of migrants and to the broad and full implementation of all the aspects of her mandate;

24. *Encourages* Governments to give serious consideration to inviting the Special Rapporteur to visit their countries so as to enable her to fulfil her mandate effectively, and notes with appreciation that some Governments have already invited her;

25. *Requests* all Governments to cooperate fully with the Special Rapporteur in the performance of the tasks and duties mandated, to furnish all information requested and to react promptly to her urgent appeals;

26. *Requests* the Special Rapporteur to take into account, while carrying out her mandate, the recommendations on migrants contained in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action;

27. *Also requests* the Special Rapporteur, in carrying out her mandate, to take into account bilateral and regional negotiations which aim at addressing, inter alia, the return and reinsertion of migrants who are undocumented or in an irregular situation;

28. *Further requests* the Special Rapporteur to submit a report on her activities to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session and to the Commission at its sixty-first session;

29. *Requests* the Secretary-General to give the Special Rapporteur all necessary human and financial assistance for the fulfilment of her mandate;

30. *Calls upon* States and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to observe on 18 December of each year International Migrants Day, proclaimed by the

General Assembly, by disseminating, inter alia, information on the human rights and fundamental freedoms of migrants and on their economic, social and cultural contributions to their host and home countries, and by sharing experiences and adopting measures to ensure their protection and to promote greater harmony between migrants and the societies in which they live;

31. *Welcomes* the entry into force of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and of two additional protocols thereto, namely, the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and encourages States parties to implement those instruments fully, and urges States that have not done so to consider ratifying them;

32. *Decides* to examine this question further, as a matter of priority, at its sixty-first session under the same agenda item.

*56th meeting  
20 April 2004*

[Adopted without a vote. See chap. XIV.- E/2004/23 – E/CN.4/2004/127]