PRESS STATEMENT

Time for Sweden and Europe to address hate crimes and discrimination against Blacks

Brussels, 12 September 2013 - An Afro-Swedish father and his one-year-old son are the latest victims in a series of violent attacks against people of African descent in Sweden. On 8 September in the city of Malmo, they were assaulted by several people for no other apparent reason than their skin colour. ENAR condemns the racist attacks, and fully supports the demand made by the Pan African Movement for Justice (Afrosvenskarnas Forum för Rättvisa) on 10 September that the Swedish government develop more effective solutions for combating and preventing Afrophobia and Afrophobia-related hate crime in the country.

Hate crimes against Blacks are not unique to Sweden but are a pan-European problem. ENAR calls on all European States to recognise and tackle Afrophobia, or anti-Black racism, as a specific form of racism rooted in the colonial past and slave trade. To achieve full inclusion of all Black Europeans, politicians must officially denounce hate crimes against Blacks and seriously address structural discrimination against people of African descent that denies millions the right to equal opportunity and treatment in education, the job market, housing, and justice. ENAR further recommends that governments collect and publish EU-wide racial discrimination and inclusion data to empirically document discrimination and exclusion impacting people of African descent.

ENAR Chair Sarah Isal said: “Although numerous Black Europeans continue to be subjected to discrimination, hate speech, and racist violence, governments in Europe frequently ignore the serious problem of Afrophobia. Sweden and other European States must recognise the severe and ongoing impact of Europe’s history of hostility and violence towards Blacks, and must develop more effective strategies for countering the structural and everyday racism that prevents the inclusion of many Blacks in European society. It is a great loss to Europe that it fails to take full advantage of the skills and talents of Black Europeans”.

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Notes to the editor:
1. The European Network Against Racism (ENAR aisbl) stands up against racism and discrimination and advocates for equality and solidarity for all in Europe. We connect local and national anti-racist NGOs throughout Europe and act as an interface between our member organisations and the European institutions. We voice the concerns of ethnic and religious minorities in European and national policy debates.