



## Fact Sheet Briefing – Afrophobia in Sweden

March 2016

This fact sheet is based on ENAR's Shadow Report questionnaire 2014/2015, answered by Jallow Momodou from *Pan African Movement for Justice*, including qualitative and quantitative data.

Defining 'People of African Descent (PAD)/Black Europeans (BE) population' is no easy task and indeed various definitions and descriptions exist for the group. The UN Working Group on people of African descent proposed that: "People of African descent may be defined as descendants of the African victims of the trans-Atlantic slave trade (...) Africans and their descendants who, after their countries' independence, emigrated to or went to work in Europe, Canada and the Middle East."<sup>1</sup> The term 'Black Europeans' is used here to refer to Black people born or raised in Europe or with an EU citizenship. In some places the term 'Black people' is used to refer more broadly to all those individuals, groups and communities that define themselves as 'Black'. Accordingly, 'Black' does not necessarily refer to a skin colour so much as a sociologically constructed identity.

It is challenging to find specific data on the PAD/BE population in Sweden due to both regulations dictating collection of data on race in Sweden, as well as the lack of disaggregated data collection in Sweden due to historical reasons. Therefore, the figure of 180,000 PAD/BE living in Sweden has been indicated by the researcher as a minimum.

### Key findings and examples

#### Political representation

- It is reported that PAD/BE are the least represented group amongst all officially recognised minority groups in political office and at all political levels.

#### Employment

- There is a great disparity in employment outcomes between people of African descent and the majority population in Sweden. Although there are many factors involved in determining the employability of people generally, racial discrimination is also a factor in high levels of unemployment of Black people.
- In 2011, only 48% of men born in Africa and living in Sweden and 39% of women born in Africa and living in Sweden were in paid employment whereas the national employment rate in Sweden is 85-92%.

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<sup>1</sup> UN Working Group on People of African Descent, Identification and Definition of People of African Descent and How Racial Discrimination Against them is Manifested in Various Regions, E/CN.4/2003/WG.20/WP.3

- A study conducted in Sweden in 2015 shows that a significant number of Black people are unable to find employment that match their level of qualifications (skills and experience),<sup>2</sup> one reason being the lack of recognition and transfer of qualifications for migrants in Europe.

## Media

- Social media in Sweden has become a forum for an increasing number of racist messages that simultaneously target individuals and broadcast the message across the internet.
- It is reported that racist hate is openly shared and promoted on social media with impunity at such high rates that it has become a threat to the democratic principles upon which the country is based.

## Housing

- According to the report of a two-year project on discrimination in housing, conducted by the equality body in Malmö, out of 78 cases of discrimination in housing, 60% was discrimination based on ethnicity.<sup>3</sup> Although it is impossible to identify how many victims within the 60% are PAD/BE, it is likely that Black people will be affected as they are visible ethnic minorities.
- More generally it is reported that Black people tend to live in the older parts of urban areas and in poor quality and cramped housing.

## Hate crime and police investigation/violence

- According to PAD/BE interviewees and experts, there is a real fear within the communities that Black people, particularly young Black men, are vulnerable to violent attacks. Furthermore, the perception is that the police are failing to protect this group because they are likely to see Black males as criminals.
- The Swedish National Council on Crime prevention annual report on hate crimes indicates that the majority of hate crimes were identified as xenophobic/racist hate crimes and that Afro-Swedes were the most vulnerable. In 2014, 1,075 Afrophobic hate crimes were reported.<sup>4</sup>
- The high number of reported racially motivated crimes compared to the few that are investigated and prosecuted indicates that the Swedish Police lack relevant knowledge in dealing with Afrophobic hate crimes.
- There has been a dramatic increase in deaths following police interventions. The unit responsible for handling complaints of police misconduct (established in 2011) has been severely criticised by minority and vulnerable communities. The main criticism is that it is not an independent body but rather a separate unit within the National Police Board.<sup>5</sup>
- Racist crimes that target Black people have been linked to far-right groups.
- Black Muslim women with headscarves are reported to be especially vulnerable to racist crime in public places and in the workplace in Sweden.

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<sup>2</sup> Report of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent - visit to Sweden, 1-5 December 2014. Available here: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Racism/WGAfricanDescent/Pages/CountryVisits.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> Malmö mot Diskriminering, Diskriminering på bostadsmarknaden: 2014/2015. Available at: <http://www.malmomotdiskriminering.se/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Slutrapport-Diskriminering-p%C3%A5-bostadsmarknaden.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Brottsförebyggande Rådet, Brå. Available at: <https://www.bra.se/>

<sup>5</sup> DagensNyheter, "Rekordmångapolisiskjutningar – 'ingetmönster'" (Record-breaking number of police shootings – 'no pattern'), November 13, 2013, available at <http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/rekordmanga-polisskjutningar-inget-monster/>

- Black people in Sweden are not an 'official national minority' and therefore do not receive the same protections as the Roma, Jews, Sami and Finns. This means there is no specific authority charged with monitoring and advancing the situation of people of African descent, as is the case for national minorities and other groups which face hate crimes.

## **Recommendations**

- Develop a national anti-racism strategy with specific actions and objectives allocated to responsible institutions. The strategy should involve communities in all stages of development, implementation and assessment. Implementing bodies should have sufficient leverage, human and financial resources for the entire implementation period.
- The Government, in partnership with civil society organisations and in accordance with data protection principles, should collect equality data to annually monitor people of African descent/Black Europeans' outcomes in key social indicators in employment, health, education and housing and develop policies in response to persistent racial inequalities.
- Ease and ensure the process of recognition of foreign qualifications and encourage the validation of practical skills and experience.
- Change official and unofficial policing policies and strategies that currently encourage police to profile certain groups based on their ethnicity and/or their race and religion.
- Establish clear and truly independent oversight mechanisms of law enforcement officials and monitor all action that impacts on rights and freedoms such as counter-terrorism measures, raids, surveillance and arrests.