



Christian Conference of Asia

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CCA condemns increasing acts of racism and stigmatisation during the COVID-19 pandemic

After a spike in the outbreak of novel coronavirus, or COVID-19, racism has reared its ugly head. The COVID-19 pandemic, which originated in the city of Wuhan, China in December 2019 has led to an increase in acts of xenophobia, discrimination, violence, and racism around the world. While several cases of verbal abuse and physical assault have been witnessed against people of Chinese and Asian ethnic origin in Europe, the United States, and Australia, cases of racism against Africans in China are also on the rise.

Incidents of bias and discrimination have been reported from the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou, home to a large African student population. Many students from Nigeria, Uganda, Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, Côte d'Ivoire, Zimbabwe, and other Sub-Saharan African countries have chosen Guangzhou as their destination for higher education. Institutionally sanctioned racism has resulted in the eviction of African people, entry restrictions in certain areas, and cancellation of their visas. This is clear evidence of blatant xenophobia and racism.

Such discrimination has been meted out against Africans not just because of their race and ethnicity, but also because of the irrational and baseless assumptions that they may be carriers of the dreaded COVID-19 virus. Overnight evictions from tenements have left young students homeless and fending for themselves on the streets in the midst of a global pandemic. Travel restrictions prevent these students from returning to their home countries.

Such knee-jerk reactions to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in China reveal deeply ingrained biases. Though Guangzhou is the epicentre of acts of hatred against Africans because of the colour of their skin, stigmatisation against Africans has occurred in Beijing and other Chinese cities as well.

The Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) is alarmed at the atrocious treatment that Africans have been subjected to in China in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. The CCA condemns all acts of stigmatisation, discrimination, and racism wherever they exist especially during the pandemic. The CCA expresses its concern on the maltreatment and harassment of Africans in the time of the pandemic, who instead should be treated with dignity, respect, and care in these difficult times. The CCA calls for a complete halt of the inhumane treatment of Africans in China.

The CCA reiterates and unwaveringly upholds its principle of non-discrimination and equality, according to which no one shall be subjected to bigotry or prejudice because of their colour, ethnicity, religion, sex, gender, religion, or their social, economic, or any other status. The CCA looks forward to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to reviewing the progress China is making in overcoming racial discrimination against Africans and nationals of other countries. We believe that each person, despite differences, reflects the image and likeness of God. Hence, based on our profound faith in God, we continue our advocacy for justice, equality, and peace in the time of this global pandemic.

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General Secretary, CCA