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The Four Faces of Racialization in the Russian Federation

Introduction

This essay will analyze the processes governing the racialization of four communities in post-Soviet Russia: the Roma, Africans, Chechens and Jews. Racism in contemporary Russia is often attributed to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and thus the dismantling of Communist ideology. This caused a rapid growth in economic and social disparities, which in turn, lead to the expansion of fierce nationalist ideology (United Nations Human Rights Council, 2006). This is exemplified in Russian opinion surveys which found that more than half of respondents expressed support for the slogan “Russia is for Russians” and more than two fifths stated that they would “support a decision to deport representatives of certain ethnic groups from their region” (Law, 2009:198).

The Russian Federation in recent years has adopted a racial logic of denial, which is exemplified in a statement made by Ambassador Valery Loschinin in response to the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur for the United Nations Human Right Council (2006). The statement branded the report’s conclusions “absurd” and accused the report of being “inappropriate, both in content and conceptually” and “based on unproven data and falsification” (FIDH, 2008:8).

However, the Russian Federation has failed to enforce proper and effective anti-discrimination practices despite the guarantee of equality of rights and freedoms being enshrined in Russian law (NGO Report, 2003) thus, undermining the Ambassador’s defense. According to Human Rights Watch (2013), since Putin came to power in 2012, the Kremlin have sought obstruct the activities of civil society organizations in a crackdown “unprecedented in post-Soviet history” (no pagination). The Kremlin have systematically harassed and intimidated civil society activists and implemented a number of laws obstructing the work of non-governmental organizations (NGO). One such law, the treason law, has refigured the legal meaning of treason in Russia in such a way that could potentially criminalize the involvement of Russian activists in the sphere of international human rights. According to the United Nations Committee Against Torture (cited in Human Rights Watch, 2013: no pagination), the law could be employed to obstruct the dissemination of information on human rights conditions in Russia to the UN. Similarly, the newly implemented “foreign agents” law has the potential to bring civil society organizations who accept foreign funding into disrepute. The law obliges all groups engaging in political activism who are receiving foreign funding to register as foreign agents. However, the title ‘foreign agent’ is widely considered synonymous with ‘spy’ or ‘traitor’ thus discrediting those groups required to register (Human Rights Watch, 2013). Thus, Human Rights Watch (2013) contends that the Kremlin has implemented these repressive laws in a bid to “conflate the promotion of human rights and gov’t accountability with incursion on state sovereignty” (no pagination).

Thus, racial discrimination in the Russian Federation is both pervasive and state-sponsored in which racialized ethnic groups include Chechens, Turks, Roma, Jews and people from central Asia and the Caucasus (Holland 2004).

The following sections will consider the situation of four ethnic communities in post-Soviet Russia. Firstly, this essay will consider the situation of the Roma community, whom after having been forced to settle under a 1956 decree prohibiting vagrancy are now unable to access basic services and rights in the healthcare, employment and education sectors. This barrier to basic human rights has resulted from the Russian authorities refusal to provide residence registration to Roma families (FIDH, 2008; ERRC, 2005; United National Human Rights Council, 2006). This essay will also address vilification of Chechens by law enforcement officials and the Islamophobia rife in President Putin’s War on Terror and the Russian Orthodox Nationalist community (Russel, 2005; Verkhovsky, 2004;

Moscow Helsinki Group, 2002). Further, this essay will provide an account of the historic roots of racist violence against Africans in the Russian Federation stemming from the scape-goating of Africans in the Soviet Union. Lastly, the slightly weaker force of racialization, anti-Semitism, will be discussed with reference to the spheres of public opinion, politics and the Russian Orthodox Nationalist community. It is important to note that these groups do not exhaust the list of racialized communities in the Russian Federation.

Barriers to Basic Human Rights: The Social and Economic Marginalization of the Roma

The exclusion and mistreatment of the Roma in post-Soviet Russia is increasingly becoming a cause for concern. NGO's repeatedly maintain that the severity of the discrimination against the Roma community in the Russian Federation is most evident in the housing, employment, education and health sectors, all of which can be attributed to barriers to accessing residence registration (United Nations Human Rights Council, 2006).

The implementation of the internal passport, named Propiska, is complicit in the racial segregation of the Roma community. According to the Council of Europe (2003, cited in Law, 2012) the precariousness of the Propiska system has obstructed access to basic human rights and left the community at perpetual risk of harassment and maltreatment from law enforcement officials. Though officially abolished during the collapse of the Soviet Union, the regime still operates in many successor states including the Russian Federation. The regime requires all citizens to officially register their place of residence and change of address is forbidden without authorization from the authorities. The Propiska is required for internal migration, employment, marriage and access to education; failure to register can lead to fines or imprisonment (Law, 2012).

In 1956 the Soviet government enacted a law prohibiting vagrancy thus forcing all Roma Gypsies to settle (Law, 2012) however, conditions of the period meant many Roma constructions were never officially registered. Upon enactment, Roma communities across the USSR constructed temporary homes on empty land with verbal authorization from the Soviet government. In the following years, these construction were replaced with permanent homes in which the Roma installed their own water and electricity systems without acknowledgment or assistance from their local authorities.

Despite some verbal arrangement between Roma families and the Soviet government authorizing the initial constructions, Soviet authorities failed to certificate rights to the houses built by the Roma and thus agreements based on a "moral mutual confidence attitude" (FIDH, 2008:17) are today legally worthless. For example, in 2006 the ADC Memorial wrote to the Chudovo state archives and despite no denial that Roma were allowed to settle in Chudovo in 1980, Memorial were informed that there are no existing documents concerning the settlement (FIDH, 2008).

Without official residence registration, forced evictions of Roma peoples is commonplace in the Russian Federation. The village of Dorozhnoe, Kaliningrad has inhabited Roma peoples since the 1956 decree. In 2001 some Roma families attempted to legalize their houses where they had lived for many years, however, the authorities of Kaliningrad prohibited any further registrations and in 2005 they commenced proceedings to legally destroy the homes of Roma whom they claimed were unlawfully inhabiting the land. In June 2006 bulldozers abolished the homes of 6 Roma families. During the process, armed officials made threats of violence, burned their possessions and were racially abusive to the families. Families suffered separation as Kaliningrad authorities made no effort to provide alternative residence thus, forcing families to move in with neighbors or live in tents on the demolished sites. Subsequently, the Roma community of Dorozhnoe live in a state of extreme helplessness in which their health, nutrition and living conditions have rapidly deteriorated. In one case, a pregnant woman was forced live in a tent in a field when her home was bulldozed. Having given birth, the woman later died of an infection and her son was transferred to an orphanage. Since the demolition four Roma peoples have died and two have gone missing (Open Society Foundation, 2011). Since many Roma constructions were built without official documentation, they rarely appear on maps thus, these 'unoccupied' areas are considered potential construction sites to local real estate. Subsequently, further forced evictions are highly likely (FIDH, 2008).

Lack of residence registration has a marked effect on the health of the Roma community in Russia. Whilst theoretically, lack of residence registration should not impede the right of any person to free emergency healthcare according to the Russian Law "On Health Protection", testimonies from Roma to the European Roma Rights Center

(ERRC) claimed that they are often refused medical services unless they provide immediate payment. Similar testimonies have highlighted instances whereby doctors have arbitrarily refused to send an ambulance to Roma settlements and Roma have subsequently had to transport themselves to the nearest hospital. Issues of distance compounded by prejudice attitudes of medical staff can often result in poor quality medical care. Whilst the right to free emergency medical care for every person is enshrined in Russian Law, lack of residence registration prevents Roma from obtaining universal medical insurance. (ERRC, 2005).

Lack of residence registration also poses a barrier to education. For instance, Roma families in Volgograd requested the help of a local Romani activist to obtain the documents necessary to enroll their children in school. Enrolment required a medical test, which the families were unable to afford. The activist then attempted to obtain documents to prove their low-income status and thus have the medical test free of charge; however, proving their low-income status required a number of personal documents including residence registration. Subsequently, none of the children could enroll in elementary school (ERRC, 2005).

The Special Rapporteur recommends that forced evictions of Roma should be a matter of high priority and steps should be taken to “sensitize... Russian society to Roma history and traditions... to eliminate negative stigma... Roma are recurrently associated with” (United Nations Council of Europe, 2006:27).

The Origins and Effects of the Scapegoating of Africans in the Soviet Union

The safety of the thousands of black African students who immigrated to the former Soviet Union under educational scholarships is also a cause for considerable concern (Law, 2012). Africans are subjected to the most harassment, intimidation and racism among the student population in post-Soviet Russia and cases of violence including the use of weapons are not infrequent (United Nations Human Rights Council, 2006).

This section will contextualize the historical origins of anti-African discourse in post-Soviet Russia, which formed the trajectory for contemporary racist violence targeting African students in the Russian Federation. After the demise of Stalinism, a period of isolation for the USSR, in the early 50s and under new leader of the USSR Khrushchev, a period of cultural and political rejuvenation occurred under which the 1957 Youth Festival came to Moscow and revitalized studies of Africa. In an effort to improve relations between the USSR and the third world during decolonization, Khrushchev endeavored to attract African students to the state. The Soviet Union invested resources in Africa, implemented educational scholarships for African students and founded the Friendship University for incoming students. At the end of the 50s only 7 African students resided in the USSR but by 1990 this number had reached 30,000 (Matusevich, 2009). This paternalism was part of an overall effort to showcase the supremacy of Soviet socialism over the unjust, colonial west. Soviet media depictions of Africa as backward and defenseless, for which western colonialism was blamed, cemented this discourse of Soviet superiority (Quist-Adade, 2005). However, student life for African migrants in the USSR was far from easy. Students were met with shoddy living conditions, heavy restrictions on travel and dating ethnic Russian girls and frequent incidents of racism. Moreover, even prior to the Glasnost Soviet students resented the privileges given to their African peers who were provided approximately triple the stipends given to Soviet students per month (Matusevich, 2009).

Anti-African sentiment accelerated from 1985 when Gorbachev came to power, a period known as the glasnost era (Quist-Adade, 2005; Matusevich, 2009). Glasnost describes Gorbachev’s restructuring of the political sphere in which openness was the fundamental feature. This manifested as reduction of the power of the communist party, freedom to criticize government and increased freedom for the media (Encyclopedia Britannica Online, 2016). However, as Quist-Adade (2005) notes, during this era, aid to Africa was cut and Gorbachev argued that Soviet investment in Africa was fruitless and the USSR was receiving nothing in return. Soviet media began to use Africa as a scapegoat for the economic shortcomings resulting from the USSR’s looming defeat in the Cold War. For example, in an article in *Literator* newspaper, a prominent figure in Russian parliament bemoaned that the previous Soviet government had wasted precious Soviet resources... on peoples who had just descended from the palm trees” (pp. 84). These negative images were compounded by the portrayal of Africa “as a place of carefree existence where people cared little to none about tomorrow” exemplified in a line from the popular Russian cartoon *The Lion Cub and the Turtle*: “all I do is lie in the sun and move my ears” (Matusevich, 2009:29). Thus, with the reformation of Soviet values and Africa established as the scapegoat for the Soviet Union’s demise in the global economic sphere,

and resentment of Africans rife among Soviet students, it is unsurprising that African students residing in the state increasingly found themselves as the target of racial hatred and violence (Quist-Adade, 2005; Matusevich, 2009).

The ramifications of events of the Soviet era are still felt in contemporary Russia. For instance, the Special Rapporteur's visit to Russia heard reports that between 2004 and 2006 there were 6 deaths and approximately 90 injured victims as a result of racist violence. Moreover, in 2002 appeals from more than 30 African states were made to the Foreign Ministry for the protection of African students in the Russian Federation (United Nations Human Rights Council, 2006). Similarly, a report by the Moscow Protestant Chaplaincy concluded that nearly 2 out of 3 Africans living in Moscow had been subjected to some form of racially motivated physical assault. The report also found that many Africans avoided use of the public transport and avoided public spaces on national holidays and during football games. The report concluded that African residents of Russia were living "in a state of virtual siege" (BBC News, 2009; no pagination).

One of the most prominent and unsettling incidents of racist violence was the assassination of Samba Lampsar in April 2006. While walking in the town center, Lampsar and his friends were set upon by a stranger yelling Nazi slogans. As the students tried to flee, Lampsar was shot and killed. The weapon used by the perpetrator was later found to be decorated with a swastika and inscribed with the neo-Nazi phrase "white power". Lampsar had been an active member of the NGO community promoting tolerance and inter-cultural relations (FIDH, 2006; United Nations Human Rights Council, 2006). The FIDH (2008) concluded that the assassination of Lampsar is exemplary of "an ambush aim[ed] at the persons who participate in anti-racism events" (no pagination).

Representatives of the African community expressed the grave need for anti-African sentiment and subsequent increase in racist violence to be recognized and addressed by the Russian government. They argued for:

"The provision of adequate protection to foreign nationals and ethnic minority groups at risk of racial attacks; the delivery of appropriate sanctions to the perpetrators of such acts, in line with relevant legal provisions; and the implementation of a federal-wide education campaign that takes into account the richness of cultures and traditions in Africa, thus contributing to the promotion of tolerance and the elimination of negative stereotypes" (United Nations Human Rights Council, 2006:21).

Islamophobia and the Vilification of Chechens

The widespread vilification of Chechens and subsequent Islamophobia in the Russian Federation also warrants considerable concern. Firstly, some preliminary points regarding Chechnya's current religious demography should be emphasized. Since the Chechen resistance movement in the 1990s, Islam is considered by Chechens to be a primary feature of their ethnic identity. Islam has constituted the pillar of the movement since 1997, the year in which Chechnya officially recognized the Islamic faith as their state religion (Oxford Islamic Studies Online, 2008).

Russell (2005) illustrates Russo-Chechen relations as the refusal of Chechens to surrender to Russian rule, a ruling that forcibly serves to quash the Chechen idea of freedom. Hostility towards Chechens has a long-standing legacy in Russian and Soviet history. The Great Caucasian War (1817-64) saw the eventual defeat and deportation of the Chechens in 1864, which was accompanied in popular literature by negative imageries of the 'wicked Chechen' or the 'bogey man'. Over a century later, the typecasting of Chechens as enemies of the state was attributed to their resistance to the Bolshevik revolution and collectivization of agriculture and their purported support for Nazis. In a sinister repeat of history, Stalin employed this typecast to justify the mass deportations of the Chechen population to Siberia and Kazakhstan in the mid 1940s (Russell, 2005).

The current context exemplifies similar processes of demonization. As Russell (2005) illustrates, the aftermath of 9/11 in which Putin linked Chechen rebels with Bin Laden, the Moscow theatre siege of 2002 and a succession of other prominent terror-related incidents, have cemented widespread anti-Chechen feeling among ethnic Russians. These events also influenced the sentiments of Western leaders who subsequently cast Chechnya as Russia's primary threat in the Global War On Terror. Allied with UK and US leaders, the Putin administration "has been able to play the 'Islamic terrorist' card every time Chechnya appears on the agenda" (pp. 111). In June 2002 Putin attempted to suppress Chechen-terrorist images by publically declaring Chechen civilians were not responsible for the recent

terror atrocities. However, this declaration failed to separate authentic terrorists from those in favor of Chechen independence thus indicating a zero tolerance approach to any Chechen “advocating a political solution other than that proposed by Putin” (pp. 111). Thus, the Putin administrations vilification of Chechens paved the way for the spread of ‘caucasophobia’ (Russell, 2005).

Thus, in the past two decades and relative to the global ‘War on Terror’ and the current Russo-Chechen conflict, Chechens have been the target of fabrications of criminal accusation, arbitrary inspections and identity checks and unwarranted forced entrances into premises occupied by Chechens. These aggressive law enforcement practices are exemplary of the general trend of Islamophobia and typecasting of Chechens as terrorists by the Russian authorities, the mainstream media, extreme right political parties (United Nations Human Rights Council, 2006) and Russian Orthodox nationalists.

Chechens residing in the Russian Federation are in perpetual danger of being subjected to the fabrication of criminal cases, which manifests in the planting of drugs, ammunition and guns by law enforcement officials and accusations of involvement in terrorist activities (Moscow Helsinki Group, 2002). From August 1999, the time of the outbreak of the second Chechen conflict, human rights organizations experienced a rapid acceleration on the number of complaints regarding the planting of drugs and ammunition. This fact is compounded by the testimonies of detainees and witnesses. One such case concerns that of Timur Dakhkilgov, a Chechen who was detained by Russian police under accusations of terrorist activities. Dakhkilgov’s family home was devastated after an assault in his home city of Grozny in 1995. Upon moving to Moscow and taking employment in a factory which involved the handling of chemical substances, Dakhkilgov and his wife registered with authorities in which they had finger prints taken and a wash check on their hands administered to test for any chemical traces, which concluded that Dakhkilgov had traces of a chemical explosive on his palms. Though searches of his home yielded nothing sinister, Dakhkilgov was later detained by police and taken for interrogation where he was beaten for a confession. The subsequent TV and news reports claimed that a Chechen terrorist had been captured however, it was later found that the suspect chemical was hexsun, a solvent common in Dakhkilgov’s factory work. It was revealed by the factory’s director that the same test administered to all dyers in the factory had yielded the same results, however Dakhkilgov, a Chechen, was the only worker arrested (Moscow Helsinki Group, 2002). In the current political context, cases like these are commonplace. The Memorial Human Rights Commission highlight their suspicions that none of these cases have been able to indicate what crimes had occurred or were intended by Chechens supposedly found in possession ammunition and grenades. Moreover, supposed recovery of contraband often resulted from forced entry of law enforcement into the private residence of Chechens. Such vilification of Chechens is widely supported by ethnic Russians (Moscow Helsinki Group, 2002)

Islamophobia, a central component of anti-Chechen sentiment, is also prevalent in the rhetoric of Russian Orthodox Nationalists (Verkhovsky, 2004). As Verkhovsky (2004) notes, the Russian Orthodox Nationalist belief, which considers faith to be more important than politics, centers largely on their prime adversary, the anti-Christ, who is served by the Jews, Catholics, the West and the New World Order. Prior to the 1990s, the Moscow Patriarchate and Russian Orthodox Nationalists considered the relationship between Islam and Russian Orthodoxy to be a peaceful one and thus little attention was paid to Islam in their plethora of enemies. However, at the onset of the second Chechen war, Islamophobic sentiment among Russian Orthodox Nationalists began to gather pace and prominent figures warned of the threat of Islam in Chechnya and from Muslim migration to white-Russian regions. For instance, Roman Vershillo, a Russian Orthodox Nationalist polemicist clearly exemplifies the more radical Russian Orthodox Nationalist tendency in his portrayal of Islam as a false religion. Vershillo argues that terrorists can have no true religion and since Islam necessitates violence from its followers Islam cannot be considered a true religion. Similarly, an article by Vladimir Vasilik in the orthodox newspaper Radonezh selectively quotes antagonistic lines from the Qu’ran and in his extensive account of the threat of Islam he then adds that “an aggressive ideology is being born, one that is frankly aimed at grabbing power”(Verkhovsky, 2004:136). Since the second Chechen war, hostile sentiments have remained rife among Russian Orthodox Nationalists and many fail to separate “good and bad Islam”(Verkhovsky, 2004:136). As we have seen, these feelings are redolent of that of the law enforcement and much of the Russian population.

Overall, it is clear that anti-Chechen sentiment and Islamophobia is widespread in the Russian Federation and in the current context much of this hostility and suspicion and police corruption targeting Chechens can be attributed to the Chechen wars and President Putin’s subsequent War on Terror (Law, 2012). Thus, the need to address anti-Chechen discourse among the state, the more radical strands of the Orthodox Church and the Russian public is imperative.

Anti-Semitism in post-Soviet Russia

Anti-Semitism serves as a slightly weaker force of racialization in the Russian Federation and exists primarily in the political nationalist and Russian Orthodox Nationalist spheres rather than in dominant public opinion.

According to the SOVA Center (2009) physical violence against Jews are now rare. In 2005 only 3 Jews were physically assaulted in racially motivated attacks and this number remained steady throughout 2006. In 2006 nine more Jews suffered injuries resulting from an attack on a Mosque however, the SOVA Center (2009) regarded this incident as a one off. In 2008 5 Jews or members of Jewish organizations were physically assaulted in racially motivated violence. Anti-Semitic vandalism is a predominant form of racially motivated vandalism in Russia, however, the number of these incidents are decreasing. 2006 saw 36 acts of anti-Semitic vandalism and this number decreased to 24 by 2008. Moreover, the SOVA Center (2009) are positive about the Russian authorities counteraction to anti-Semitism. In 2007 – 2008 anti-Semitism was one of the most prosecuted manifestations of racist hate speech.

Whilst President Putin appears committed to the fight against anti-Semitism, Anti-Semitism in the political sphere is yet to be entirely eradicated. The Special Rapporteur noted the potential for anti-Semitism to gather pace in political discourse. Gibson and Howard (2007) argue that often anti-Semitism is employed in political rhetoric by the more nationalist parties and figures in a bid to gain mass support from the electorate. For instance, in 1998 a Communist party Duma member came under fire for expressing explicitly anti-Semitic sentiments. The Communist Party leader, Gennady Zyuganov, not only failed to condemn Duma member's comments but also actively supported them. Zyuganov's statement of response attributed the "zionization of the government" to the "present catastrophic conditions of the country, mass impoverishment and dying out of its population" (pp. 203). Similarly, the leader of the Liberal Democratic Party has a history of demonization Jews in a bid for political support. One of his most hateful and provocative claims was the accusation that Jews incite wars: "You will always find Jews where war is raging, because they realize that money flows where blood is spilled" (Associated Press, 1998 cited in Gibson and Howard, 2007). However, Union of Councils for Jews (UCJS) in the Former Soviet Union applauds Putin's condemnation of anti-Semitism. The UCJS argue that Putin is committed in the fight against anti-Semitism and note his embracing gestures such as his praising of the Jewish contribution to history and contemporary life in Russia and his involvement in big Jewish events (Howard and Gibson, 2007). Whilst it can be concluded that anti-Semitism is not the dominant sentiment in Russian politics, some observers are unconvinced that Putin's incentives rest entirely on anti-racist sentiment. One stance is that anti-Semitism is politically counter-productive for Putin since the US government has presented Russian government with billions of dollars (Howard and Gibson, 2007). Perhaps, it is fitting to conclude that anti-Semitism in the political sphere will only remain the sentiment of the nationalist strands of politics and not the dominant politics so long as it remains politically costly.

However, anti-Semitism is rife in the domain of Russian Orthodox Nationalists (Verkhovsky, 2004; Rossman, 2002). Russian Orthodox Nationalists consider the world Jewry, as a supposed servant of the anti-Christ, to be the principle adversary of the both Russia and the Christian faith. Russian Orthodox Nationalists advocate the common conspiracy theory that Jews are in control of the USA government, international finance and the less commonly heard theory that Jews control the Roman Catholics and Islam (Verkhovsky, 2004). Rossman (2002) writes that Orthodox literature teaches that the anti-Christ was a Judean Prince who in his efforts to tarnish Christianity with demonic teachings would imitate Jesus. In their abandonment of Jesus, the Jews have succumbed to these demonic powers and thus now act as the primary supporters of the anti-Christ "who will ruin the world" (pp. 200). These beliefs are central to the Russian Orthodox Nationalist faith of the post-Soviet era:

"The Jews did not accept Christ, the real Messiah, who came in the name of God the Father.

They are waiting for their own Messiah, the anti-Christ, who will come in his own name" (pp. 200).

Though these teachings do not directly incite racist violence against Jews, these teachings remain influential in shaping perceptions of Jews in other domains of Christianity (Rossman, 2002).

On a more positive note, anti-Semitism, though not entirely eradicated, appears neither pervasive nor potent in the domain of public opinion (Gibson and Howard, 2007). In a survey looking at anti-Semitic attitudes less than a fifth agreed that Jewish citizens should be held responsible for domestic problems in Russia and just over 10% were of the opinion that Russia would benefit if Jews left the country. The largest proportion of anti-Semitic sentiment came in response to the statement 'Jews prefer money to people' for which nearly two fifths of respondents agreed

and only one fifth disagreed while the rest gave a 'don't know' response. Overall, the majority of respondents rejected statements of anti-Semitic prejudice in three out of four of the question topics. Moreover, when compared with a 1992 survey using the same items, anti-Semitism increased by an average of only 1.7 percentage points. Thus Gibson and Howard (2007) found little evidence of anti-Semitism in the domain of public opinion thus, they reject the theory that Jews serve as a scapegoat for Russia's domestic problems.

Overall, it would appear that intellectual anti-Semitism in the political nationalist and Russian Orthodox Nationalist domain is the predominant manifestation of this type of hate-speech. Whilst anti-Semitism is a weaker force in the public domain and assault against Jews and anti-Semitic vandalism is rare, it is important to shut down the debate and eradicate anti-Semitism from all sphere of Russian life.

Conclusions

Having considered the four faces of racialized communities in post-Soviet Russia, it is clear that racist discourse is highly varied from community to community and is a topic that requires urgent attention, particularly, for the Roma, Africans and Chechens residing in Russia. One would argue that addressing the recommendation of the Special Rapporteur would be an appropriate starting point. The Special Rapporteur recommends that the Russian government should publically acknowledge the presence and spread of xenophobia and racism, take measures to end practices of racial profiling among Russian authorities particularly with regard to residence registration and fervently enforce legislation aimed at eradicating racism (United Nations Human Rights Council, 2006). These are only some of the recommendations made by the Special Rapporteur.

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