

# International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

21 March 2026



Graduate Women International (GWI)

## DID YOU KNOW?

21 March marks the Sharpeville massacre, where 69 peaceful protesters in South Africa were killed in 1960 for opposing apartheid. The UN proclaimed this International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in 1966 to urge the end of the various forms of racial discrimination and systemic racism. Yet today, racial and ethnic discrimination still blocks millions from equal rights, safety, and opportunities. Racism and sexism intersect, creating even greater barriers for girls and women of colour in staying in school and reaching leadership roles. Graduate Women International addresses this issue through advocacy for women's and girls' rights, equality, and access to quality secondary and tertiary education. For girls and women, regardless of race or background, to gain opportunities, to realize their potential.

Source: UN, UNESCO



# INTERESTING READ

Intersectional feminism provides a framework for tackling overlapping inequalities like racism, sexism, and classism, which compound to create unique experiences of discrimination beyond any single factor. Coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, it centers the voices of those facing multiple oppressions, such as Black women or migrant girls, to reveal how inequalities exacerbate each other, as seen in crises like COVID-19, increases in racism, and climate disasters. By highlighting connections across issues like violence, economic exclusion, and environmental burdens, it drives inclusive movements that address all forms of oppression simultaneously for true justice.



# ADVOCACY IDEAS

Reflect on your own **use of language**: notice and adjust words or phrases that reinforce stereotypes or exclude others.

**Educate yourself**: follow accounts led by women of colour, read UN Women and UNESCO reports on racism's impact on girls' education.



**Call out**: biased comments or jokes in class, work, or private settings - with facts and support.

**Amplify voices**: share stories from girls and women facing racial barriers, especially via Graduate Women International initiatives.

**Local action**: support scholarships for racialised girls, push for anti-racism policies at your uni/workplace, or host a 21 March discussion event.

