



**Forum:** Advisory Panel

**Issue:** Methods to promote minorities in North America

**Student officer:** Sochan Rungsung

**Position:** Chair

### Overview of the Issue

USA; Canada

In North America, issues of lack of representation and rights of minorities are faced throughout mainly USA, Canada and Mexico. The minority groups are mainly regarded in ethnic and racial groups; religious groups; sexual identification and indigenous people.

“The USA presents a minority situation of unusual diversity and complexity. There are seven key minority groupings: Latinos (including Puerto Ricans), African Americans, Asian Pacific Americans, Arab and other Middle Eastern Americans, Native Americans, Native Hawai’ians, and Inuit and Alaska Natives. In most cases, these groupings include several distinct subgroups. There are dozens of other distinctive ethnic and religious groups in the USA. While some are small immigrant groups that do not yet have sufficient numbers and history to attract notice, others have been relatively successful in reaching accommodation with the dominant population and cannot be said to suffer significant discrimination as minorities in the USA today.”

In Canada, issues regarding the indigenous people still continue.

*Events in Canada (2017/18):*

“Government commitments to respect and protect the rights of Indigenous Peoples were contradicted by the failure to address violations of treaty-protected Indigenous hunting and fishing rights by the planned flooding of the Peace River Valley in the province of British Columbia for the Site C dam.

The Canadian Human Rights Tribunal issued three non-compliance orders against the federal government for discrimination in services for First Nations children and families.

The Public Inquiry Commission on Relations between Indigenous Peoples and Certain Public Services in Québec held hearings throughout the year.

In June the province of Ontario agreed to fund the clean-up of a river system contaminated with mercury. In November the federal government agreed to provide specialized medical care for mercury poisoning as long sought by members of the Grassy Narrows First Nation.



In July the Supreme Court of Canada, in a case brought by the Inuit hamlet of Clyde River, ruled that the government has an obligation to intervene when regulatory agencies fail to protect Indigenous rights.

In August the UN CERD Committee expressed concern about Indigenous land rights violations and Canada's failure to respect the right of free, prior and informed consent. The Committee asked Canada to report back within one year on measures to address the impacts of the Site C dam. In December the provincial government in British Columbia announced that construction of the Site C dam would continue, despite the objections of affected First Nations.

In November the government announced support for a bill to develop a legislative framework for implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

In November, the Supreme Court rejected a potentially groundbreaking legal challenge by the Ktunaxa Nation in British Columbia which sought to apply constitutional protection of religious freedom to the preservation of Indigenous Peoples' sacred sites."

In Mexico gender-based violence against women and girls was widespread. Most of the cases were inadequately investigated and perpetrators enjoyed impunity. Sufficient and current data on gender-based killings was not available. However, official data for 2016 was published indicating that 2,668 women were considered to be victims of homicide, pending further investigations.

In all North American countries, issues regarding rights for LGBT are still ongoing. Although laws have been made and activities have been legalized, the population of the countries have not completely accepted this and there is still discrimination and abuse of the LGBT.

## Key Terms

**Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR):** Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

**Minorities:** “Refers to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, pursuant to the United Nations Minorities Declaration.”

**Visible minority:** “Refers to whether a person belongs to a visible minority group as defined by the Employment Equity Act and, if so, the visible minority group to which the person belongs. The Employment Equity Act defines visible minorities as “persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour”. The visible minority population consists mainly of the following groups: South Asian, Chinese, Black, Filipino, Latin American, Arab, Southeast Asian, West Asian, Korean and Japanese.”

**Amerindians:** Indigenous peoples of Mexico that were present before the arrival of Europeans.

**LGBT:** An initialism that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender.

**United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC):** “The Human Rights Council is an inter-governmental body within the United Nations system made up of 47 States responsible for the promotion and protection of all human rights around the globe.” (United Nations. “United Nations Human Rights Council.”)

**Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR):** “The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) represents the world's commitment to universal ideals of human dignity. They have a unique mandate from the international community to promote and protect all human rights. They are mandated to promote and protect human rights for all people.” (OHCHR. “What We Do.”)

## Countries and Organizations Involved

**United States of America:** The USA has a population of 328,284,386 people, which contains a diverse demographic of ethnic, religious, sexual (orientation, gender, identity) and other groups. The country faces constant issues and protests regarding minorities. “On 20 January, 2017, Donald Trump was sworn in as President, following an election campaign in which he made comments and promised policies that were discriminatory or otherwise contradicted international human rights principles.”

More information on the US:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/americas/united-states-of-america/report-united-states-of-america/>

<https://www.samhsa.gov/specific-populations/racial-ethnic-minority>

<https://www.prb.org/americasracialandethnicminorities/>

**Canada:** “Discrimination against Indigenous Peoples continued, in particular the failure to protect their rights to lands and resources. Urgent measures were required to ensure the safety of Indigenous women and girls while a national inquiry was under way. There was a substantial increase in numbers of asylum-seekers crossing the border from the USA irregularly.”

More information on Canada:

Catalyst, [\*Quick Take: Visible Minorities in Canada\*](#) (April 9, 2018).

Catalyst, [\*Career Advancement in Corporate Canada: A Focus on Visible Minorities ~ Survey Findings\*](#) (2007).

Douglas Quan, “Have Canada’s Changing Demographics Made it Time to Retire the Concept of ‘Visible Minority?’” *National Post*, June 27, 2014.

Ryerson University, [\*DiversityLeads 2014 Report: Key Preliminary Findings\*](#) (2014).

Ryerson University, [\*DiversityLeads—Women and Visible Minorities in Senior Leadership Positions: A Profile of Greater Montreal, Diversity Institute\*](#) (February 2013).

Statistics Canada, “[\*Visible Minority and Population Group Reference Guide\*](#),” *National Household Survey, 2011* (2015).

Tamara Hudon, “[\*Visible Minority Women\*](#),” *Women in Canada: A Gender-Based Statistical Report*(Statistics Canada, 2016).



<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-010-x/99-010-x2011001-eng.cfm>

<http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3Var.pl?Function=DEC&Id=45152>

**Mexico:**

“Indigenous peoples have retained local forms of organization to defend their culture and livelihoods. Others have witnessed the collapse of their traditions under the burden of poverty, and believe that they must reject their ethnic identity and integrate into mestizo society if they are to improve their living conditions.”

More Information on Mexico:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/americas/mexico/report-mexico/>

<https://minorityrights.org/minorities/indigenous-peoples-4/>

<https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/largest-ethnic-groups-in-mexico.html>

**Minority Rights Group International (MRGI):** Minority Rights Group International is an international organization aimed at the promotion of rights for ethnic, national, religious and linguistic minorities and indigenous peoples present globally.

**Amnesty International:** “Amnesty International is a global movement of more than 7 million people who take injustice personally. They are campaigning for a world where human rights are enjoyed by all.” Amnesty International is involved in almost all issues regarding human rights and is constantly active in human rights for minorities and promoting minorities.

## Related UN resolutions and Previous Approaches to Solving the Issue

### **United Nations Guide for Minorities**

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/minorities/pages/minoritiesguide.aspx>

### **Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities**

**47/135 UN Resolution**

**18 December, 1992**

<http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/47/a47r135.htm>

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/minorities.aspx>

[https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Minorities/Booklet\\_Minorities\\_English.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Minorities/Booklet_Minorities_English.pdf)

### **HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS**

**51/536 UN Resolution**

**22 October, 1996**

<http://www.un.org/documents/ga/docs/51/plenary/a51-536.htm>

### **Minority Rights: International Standards and Guidance for Implementation**

[https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/MinorityRights\\_en.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/MinorityRights_en.pdf)

### **Promoting and Protecting Minority Rights A Guide for Advocates**

[https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/HR-PUB-12-07\\_en.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/HR-PUB-12-07_en.pdf)

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2018/07/Chapter-VIIIndigenous-peoples-and-ethnic-minorities.pdf>

### **United Nations Resolutions - Sexual orientation and gender identity**

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/discrimination/pages/lgbtunresolutions.aspx>

[x](#)

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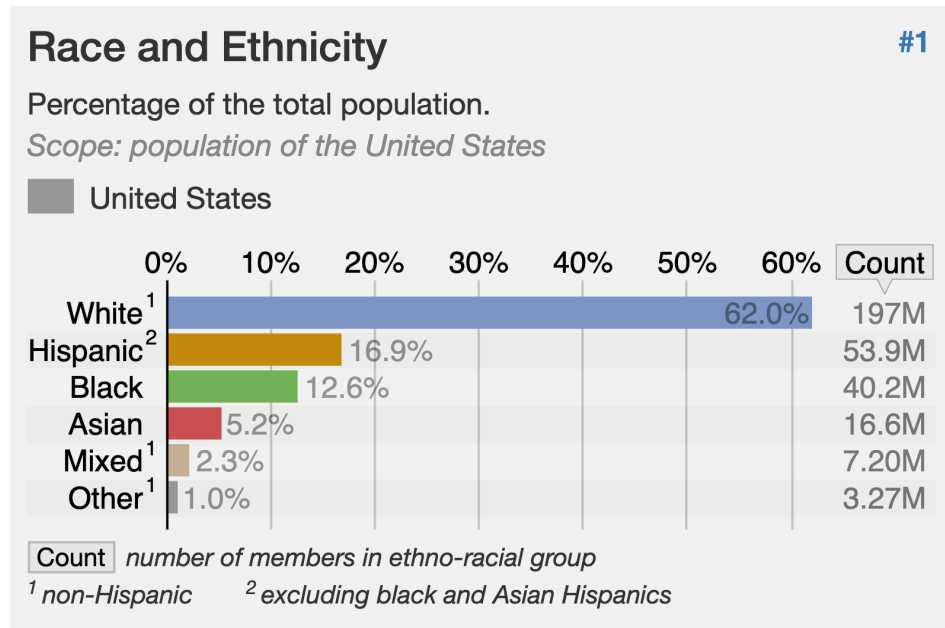
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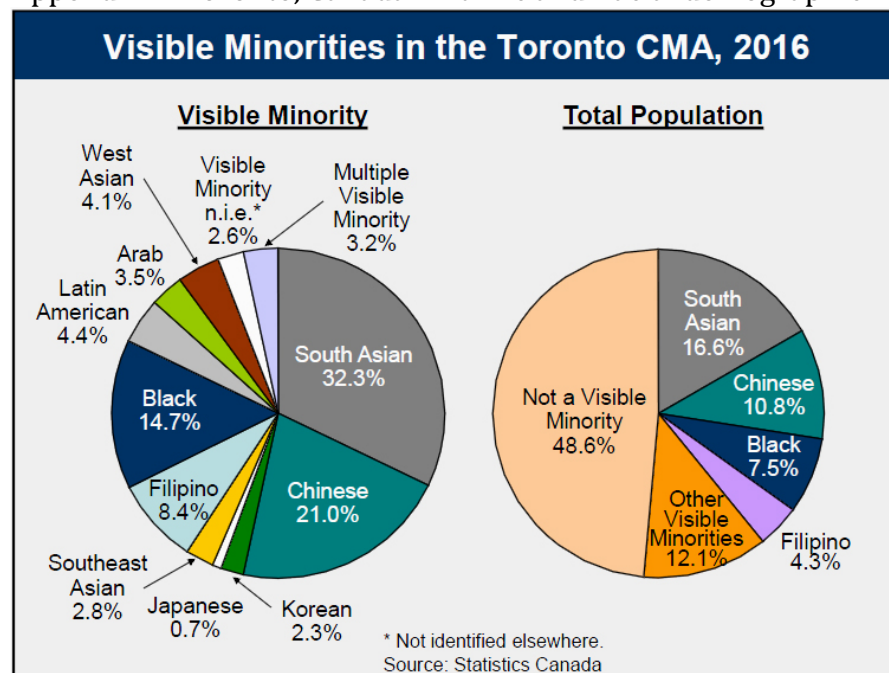
## Appendix

### Appendix 1: US Ethnic and Racial demographic



<https://statisticalatlas.com/United-States/Race-and-Ethnicity>

### Appendix 2: Toronto, Canada - Ethnic and Racial demographic



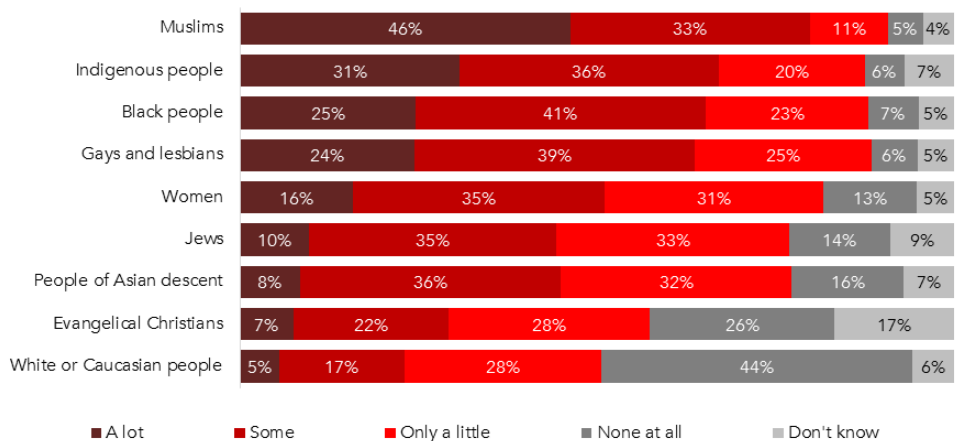
<https://www.fin.gov.on.ca/en/economy/demographics/census/cenhi16-9.html>

### Appendix 3: Mexico - Ethnic Demographic Largest Ethnic Groups In Mexico

Rank	Ethnic Group	Population (%)
1	Mestizo (Amerindian-Spanish)	62.0
2	Mostly Amerindian	21.0
3	Other	10.0
4	Amerindian	7.0

### Appendix 4: Survey of Perceived Amounts of Discrimination – Canada and US

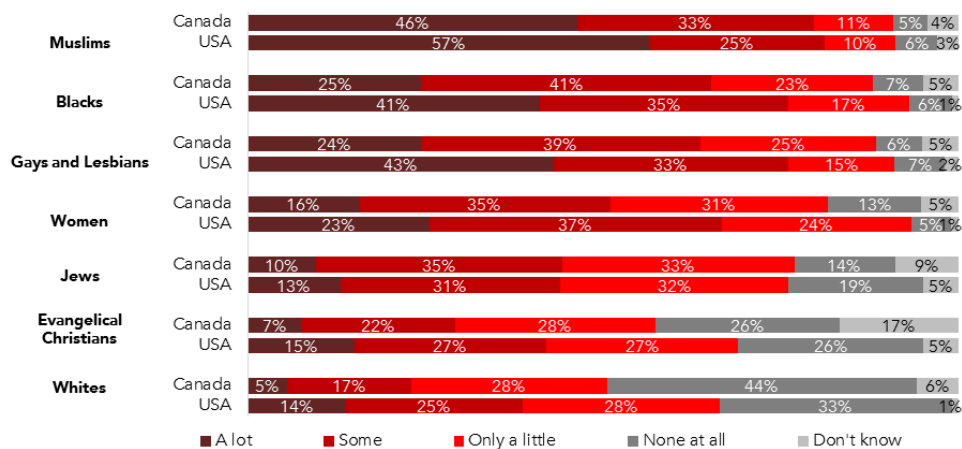
## DISCRIMINATION IN CANADA



ABACUS DATA

How much discrimination is there against each group in our society today?

## CANADA COMPARED TO USA



ABACUS DATA

US Data from the Pew Research Center (December 2016)

How much discrimination is there against each group in our society today?

<https://abacusdata.ca/muslims-and-indigenous-people-face-the-most-discrimination-in-canada-according-to-canadians/>