



## Economic and Social Council

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### Commission for Social Development

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**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and  
the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly:  
priority Theme: Affordable housing and social protection  
systems for all to address homelessness**

### **Statement submitted by Fédération Européenne des Centres de Recherche et d'Information sur le Sectarisme (FECRIS), a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council\***

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## Statement

In the year 2020 sect victims cry out for affordable autonomous housing and recovery, social protection for truly needy families so that no one is left behind by 2030

It is so important to understand in the twenty-first century what is the nature of induced poverty for sect victims and their families. We at Fédération Européenne des Centres de Recherche et d'Information sur le Sectarisme have observed directly how sect adherents have become marginalized members of society for decades. It is essential to understand the totalitarian nature of cult organizations or extremist destructive groups. What they share in common is their authoritarian pyramid power structure. The individual sect member lacks true financial autonomy and full personal decision making when dealing with everyday mundane choices as a cult member.

When we are considering the topic of affordable housing it is becoming more challenging for those in the working class of our mainstream culture. When you examine a marginalized category like sect victims and their families. Affordable housing has the added factor of enforced dependency based on cult induced poverty compliance. This is dependent on fellow sect members providing conditional financial support for affordable housing. If the sect member does not comply with cult policy and the non-compliant sect member has financial support withdrawn. Many sect members do not have the autonomous financial resources to receive affordable housing funds to be independent. Cult organizations are notorious for amassing vast amounts wealth for themselves and leaving many of the everyday sect members destitute. Even after a life time career of service and sacrificial dedication many lack the financial resources for affordable housing for themselves. They are dependent upon charity and the mercy of others or government sponsored assistance with tax payer funding.

The issue of fundamental human rights plays a key role as expressed with the 58th session of the Commission for Social Development. It is important to examine some of the key areas of common ground we have at the European Federation of Centres of Information and Research on Sectarianism with the Commission for Social Development concerning human rights, social protection considerations and affordable housing. The international human rights arena is the foundation which other rights need to be considered. It will important to consider sect members who qualify as a vulnerable group who are considered on the margins of society. Many are trapped inside cult organizations feeling alienated from mainstream society and social exclusion. Knowing your human rights and accessing them means addressing inequalities not available to sect members. Due to numerous cult organizations having hostility towards legal bodies that challenge their financial interests.

We at the Fédération Européenne des Centres de Recherche et d'Information sur le Sectarisme agree with the 58th session of the Commission for Social Development for the need to address the inequalities and appropriate voluntary social inclusion as a real option. Sect members face the induced reality of guilt and fear instilled in them by destructive extremist groups so that decent work and social protection legal policies are avoided. Many cults do not provide health insurance or social security for retirement after a lifetime of faithful service. Social inclusion and social protection options are critical for truly informed decisions. Avoidable discrimination is a serious matter of proper education concerning entrapped sect members and their families. Affordable housing is rooted in sound finances, but sects have induced poverty practices that created impoverishment and unwanted homelessness for victims who are not compliant with cult policies and dictatorial leadership.

Viable and ethical social protection policies for sect victims are really neglected. This is especially true for women and minor females. Authoritarian male cult leaders dominate most sect organizations and view women as lesser beings and abusively violate their human rights. Many females serve as slave and virtual subservient labour where their wages are sub-standard. Most cults examine what sect members earn and many give it to male leaders who determine how it is spent.

Affordable housing is dependent upon cult organization support and female sect members cannot act outside of the group being financially indebted. This is due to lack of sustainable resources for many female members creating an enforced dependency on the cult. Many women are subjected to sexual violence and forced marriages. Extremist terrorist groups are well known for financial purchases of captured girls and marriage transactions with unwanted rape and pregnancies. Human rights violations of this magnitude impact women who lack legitimate access to independent affordable housing and truly need social protections. Appropriate interventions could apply through the efforts of the 58th session of the Commission for Social Development and we at European Federation of Centres of Information and Research on Sectarianism can provide our contributions where this need is crying out for assistance.

Access to justice for sect victims also includes financial literacy that cult and former cult members are truly lacking. A number of sect organizations have some of the best legal assistance money can buy. It is very different for the average cult members primarily due to the inequalities and financial deprivation members suffered but the cult organization is in a very different wealthy category. The legal power imbalance is quite striking and needs social protection policies to facilitate real and genuine justice to those who need it. When we consider effective remedies, it is essential to engage the legal system governing property rights and human rights protections concerning affordable housing. Addressing discrimination barriers that interfere with access for needy individuals relies on sound fiscal policies that support affordable housing and avoids homelessness. The factors that cause avoidable induced poverty from cult organizations should be considered for reparations funding to the deceived victims.

Individual rights over predatory lender property rights is a real serious challenge in our modern cultures. Numerous sect organizations are notorious for their oppressive financial practices regarding property gains and former sect members are financially depleted when they leave. Financial accountability is crucial when dealing with public lending institutions, but cult groups insulate themselves in many cases from mainstream financial transparency concerning affordable housing and social protections. Forced property evictions should be thoroughly investigated for the causal factors so real victims have rights of appeal and social protection remedies can be applied appropriately.

In order to address meaningful change in addressing property inequities and policies, it is important to have real dialogue and the 58th session of the Commission for Social Development can facilitate. We at the European Federation of Centres of Information and Research on Sectarianism could offer our experience and expertise in our community to provide feedback towards real remedies for the goal of 2030.

When dealing with social protection and a major factor of ill health in sect members is due to preventable illnesses stemming from a lack of financial resources. These funds are really diverted to wealthy cult organizational priorities and not to the supportive cult members that deny themselves health care coverage and some into unwanted homelessness. Accessing decent work and living conditions requires education for those sects and former cult members who need it. We at Fédération Européenne des Centres de Recherche et d'Information sur le Sectarisme appreciate

the efforts of the 58th session of the Commission for Social Development to address this preventable problem.

The two most vulnerable people groups are the young and the elderly sect members and their families. These two groups share a dependent relationship to those who support them. Many children in destructive cults or extremist terrorist groups are subject to slave child labor avoiding basic human right protections and accountability. Sect child sex abuse avoids the proper reporting and social protection policies designed to protect them. The elderly in sects also suffer from declining health and need financial resources normally available through social security and protection policies. Many cults avoid reporting and transparency policies for the elderly and lack proper education on the social protection resources available to them. We at the European Federation of Centres of Information and Research on Sectarianism desire to assist those sect victims in real need. We want to work with the 58th session of the Commission for Social Development in our shared common ground for a much brighter future.

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