



Statement, delivered on behalf of the OIC by Ambassador Zaman Mehdi, Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN, during Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Racism

4 October 2021

Madam President,

The OIC thanks the Special Rapporteur for her report.

The OIC is of the view that the use of digital technologies for racial profiling and segregation is symptomatic of deep-rooted biases, long standing xenophobia and racism. These troubling developments, in turn, are shaping national citizenship and immigration policies that target certain communities on the basis of their race, religion or ethnicity.

The SR has rightly observed that migrants and refugees are being discriminated on the basis of their national origin, race, ethnicity, religion and other impermissible grounds. We also echo her concerns regarding inbuilt biases and discrimination against Muslims on social media. Such biases serve as fodder for Islamophobia, which is a pernicious manifestation of racism and an affront to basic human dignity and other fundamental rights.

We note SR's pertinent observations that economic, political and other societal forces are driving expansion in the discriminatory use of digital technologies. We also note the observation that these technologies are not necessarily neutral or objective. The OIC underlines the urgent need to counter various forms and manifestations of racism both offline and online, by countering their structural and systemic drivers.

We are deeply concerned over the unbridled amplification of hate in the form of words, images and voices on social media, and the increasing use of these platforms to incite violence. Such incitement to violence and digital hate raises questions of thresholds where freedom of expression may be invoked for hate speech and incitement to violence, including on the basis of religion, race or ethnicity.

We invite SR's views on the applicability of and compatibility of articles 19 and 20 of ICCPR with documented instances of incitement to hatred and violence in the digital era, given the anonymity, speed and virality.

I thank you.