



**Statement on behalf of OIC, delivered by Amb. Khalil Hashmi, Permanent Representative,**  
**During General Debate on Item 9**  
**52<sup>nd</sup> Human Rights Council Session**  
**30 March 2023**

**Madam Vice President,**

This year we have witnessed at least five incidents of public desecration of the Holy Quran in Denmark, Sweden, and the Netherlands- as the latest manifestation of racial hatred and xenophobia.

The OIC Group echoes the outrage of nearly 2 billion human beings whose faith is anchored in the message of the Quran.

“Let there be no compulsion in religion” is the Quran’s message *in Chapter 2, verse 256*, over a millennia before freedom of religion and belief; and freedom of expression got enshrined in legal instruments.

This act of desecration is not just a provocation to Muslims; it’s an act to sabotage inter-faith harmony and peace.

Unequivocal condemnation should have been the starting point of our response to these acts.

Sadly, some chose to hide behind the self-serving interpretation of human rights.

Absence of preventive legal deterrence, inaction and shying away from speaking out encourages further incitement to hatred and violence.

Unsurprisingly more incidents have followed.

If those responsible for prevention were not complicit earlier. They are now.

They are in violation of their obligations under international human rights laws.

They are also in dereliction of their commitments under the consensus HRC resolution 16/18 and the Rabat Plan of Action. These incidents meet the threshold of incitement to hatred and violence by any standard.

**Madam Vice President,**

The human rights machinery's general apathy towards these incidents is nothing less than appalling.

We particularly note with disappointment the choice made by Special Rapporteurs on Freedom of Religion and Belief, and Freedom of Expression to not call out these deliberate acts of hate.

Speaking in nuanced terms, without condemning these incidents starkly contrasts with their practice of often naming countries and pronouncing publicly and clearly on events incomparable in magnitude or impact.

We reject the selective academic interpretations of human rights law.



The selectivity and partiality on these issues, incidents, and interpretations is at variance with high standards of objectivity and independence expected of experts.

It has shaken our faith in their work.

Finally, we have a message for those enjoying impunity in desecrating our Holy book!

When you hold the next copy, try reading it.

**Thank you.**