



Statement, delivered by Amb. Bilal Ahmad, on behalf of OIC Group, during Panel Discussion on Countering Religious Hatred Constituting Incitement to Discrimination, Hostility or Violence
55th HRC Session
8 March 2024

Mr. President,

We thank the OHCHR for organizing this panel discussion.

Resolution 53/1 on countering religious hatred is a result oriented, context specific and proportionate response to a series of incidents of Quran desecrations.

At the time of its adoption, we had warned that the existing normative framework developed by this Council had not yielded results as foreseen.

A combination of both affirmative measures such as promoting harmony and preventive measures including prohibiting dangerous advocacy of hate are necessary.

Clearly the absence of preventive policies gave way to impunity.

We appreciate that OHCHR has followed up on the resolution 53/1 by holding consultations and inviting inputs.

We also recognize that at least one country has processed legislation criminalizing Quran desecrations, while others have remained unambiguous in rejecting this form of hatred.

Yet the overall trend of spreading hate with impunity is unmistakable.

While only 6 incidents of public desecrations had been recorded at the time of the adoption of the resolution, several dozen incidents followed it.

The provocateurs clearly perceive and exploit a normative gap for inciting discrimination, hostility or violence.

Publicly desecrating the Quran is emblematic of Islamophobia, and Anti-Muslim advocacy.

Demonstrating political will remains necessary and in line with the existing commitments under Resolution 16/18.

A prohibition would be consistent with ICCPR, ICERD, HRC Resolution 16/18 and Resolution 53/1.

Consistent with this, we view public and premeditated desecration of the Quran, targeting of Mosques and Churches in the OPT and elsewhere, and the Israeli invasions of Al Aqsa Mosque as grave forms of religious hatred.

I thank you!