



Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the UN **Geneva**

Statement, delivered on behalf of OIC by Ambassador Khalil Hashmi, Pakistan Permanent Representative to the UN, during General Debate Agenda Item no. 9 at the 45th session of Human Rights Council

(01 October 2020)

Madam President,

The OIC wishes to underscore that as a religion of peace and tolerance, Islam preaches virtues of social equality, peaceful co-existence and inter-faith harmony.

The Holy Quran states:

“Allah Almighty created humans of a male and female and made them as tribes, families and nations so they may know each other. The most honorable of the humans is the one who acts rightly”ⁱ.

The anti-racism message given by our Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) fourteen hundreds years ago resonates to this day. He had said:

“ There is no superiority of a white person over a black person and no superiority of a black person over a white person. Superiority is on acting rightly”ⁱⁱ.

With such clear injunctions, the OIC rejects any discrimination on basis of race, gender, creed, color and religion.

We emphasize the need to effectively combating defamation of religion and incitement to violence through denigration of revered religious personalities and symbols; destruction of mosques and places of worship; and marginalization of Muslim communities through State-sanctioned acts, policies and laws.

In particular, we strongly condemn burning of the Holy Quran in some European countries and republication of caricatures denigrating religious personalities and symbols.

Premeditated acts of offending the sentiments of 1.8 billion Muslims cannot be justified on the pretext of freedom of expression or free press.

While the OIC attaches great importance to the right to freely express opinion, we remain of the firm view that this right does not grant a license to hate speech, deliberate ridicule or willful insult of other people’s religion, religious personalities and sensibilities.

Article 20 of ICCPR prohibits any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence.



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The OIC, therefore, calls upon relevant countries to ensure accountability of all such reprehensible acts like burning of the Holy Quran and denigration of religious personalities. Relevant States must also end impunity for the perpetrators of such acts.

Madam President,

Respect begets respect, and tolerance breeds tolerance.

The OIC calls upon the Members and Observers States of this Council as well as the civil society to optimize their collective efforts to promote peaceful co-existence, inter-faith harmony and dialogue to eliminate the scourge of Islamophobic sentiments and acts.

Thank you.

ⁱ (49:13)

ⁱⁱ The Last Sermon