



Human Rights Council

Resolution 4/9. Combating defamation of religions

The Human Rights Council,

Recalling the Outcome Document of the World Summit 2005 adopted in resolution 60/1 of 24 October 2005 which emphasized the responsibilities of all States, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations, to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language or religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, and which acknowledged the importance of respect and understanding for religious and cultural diversity throughout the world,

Recalling also the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted in September 2001 by the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (A/CONF.189/12 and Corr.1),

Recognizing the valuable contributions of all religions to modern civilization and the contribution that dialogue among civilizations can make to an improved awareness and understanding of the common values shared by all humankind,

Recalling also the Final Communiqué of the Third Extraordinary Session of the Islamic Summit Conference, held in Makkah, Saudi Arabia, on 7 and 8 December 2005, which expressed serious concern at rising discrimination against Muslims,

Taking note of the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on “Combating defamation of religions” (A/HRC/4/50),

Welcoming the report by the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance on the “Situation of Muslims and Arabs in various parts of the world” (E/CN.4/2006/17),

Also welcoming the report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination xenophobia and related intolerance submitted to the

Human Rights Council at its fourth session (A/HRC/4/19), in which he draws the attention of member States to the serious nature of the defamation of all religions and to the promotion of the fight against these phenomena by strengthening the role of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, promoting reciprocal understanding and joint action to meet the fundamental challenges of development, peace and the protection and promotion of human rights,

Emphasizing that States, non-governmental organizations, religious bodies and the media have an important role to play in promoting tolerance and freedom of religion and belief through education,

Noting with concern that defamation of religions is among the causes of social disharmony and leads to violations of human rights,

Noting with deep concern the increasing trend in recent years of statements attacking religions, Islam and Muslims in particular, in human rights forums,

1. *Expresses concern* at negative stereotyping of religions and manifestations of intolerance and discrimination in matters of religion or belief;
2. *Expresses deep concern* at attempts to identify Islam with terrorism, violence and human rights violations;
3. *Notes with deep concern* the intensification of the campaign of defamation of religions, and the ethnic and religious profiling of Muslim minorities, in the aftermath of the tragic events of 11 September 2001;
4. *Recognizes* that, in the context of the fight against terrorism, defamation of religions becomes an aggravating factor that contributes to the denial of fundamental rights and freedoms of target groups, as well as their economic and social exclusion;
5. *Also expresses concern* at laws or administrative measures that have been specifically designed to “control” and “monitor” Muslim and Arab minorities, thereby stigmatizing them further and legitimating the discrimination that they experience;

6. *Strongly deplores* physical attacks and assaults on businesses, cultural centres and places of worship of all religions as well as targeting of religious symbols;

7. *Urges* States to take resolute action to prohibit the dissemination, including through political institutions and organizations, of racist and xenophobic ideas and material aimed at any religion or its followers that constitute incitement to racial and religious hatred, hostility or violence;

8. *Also urges* States to provide, within their respective legal and constitutional systems, adequate protection against acts of hatred, discrimination, intimidation and coercion resulting from defamation of religions, to take all possible measures to promote tolerance and respect for all religions and their value systems and to complement legal systems with intellectual and moral strategies to combat religious hatred and intolerance;

9. *Further urges* all States to ensure that all public officials, including members of law enforcement bodies, the military, civil servants and educators, in the course of their official duties, respect different religions and beliefs and do not discriminate against persons on the grounds of their religion or belief, and that any necessary and appropriate education or training is provided;

10. *Emphasizes* that everyone has the right to freedom of expression, which should be exercised with responsibility and may therefore be subject to limitations as provided by law and necessary for respect of the rights or reputations of others, protection of national security or of public order, public health or morals and respect for religions and beliefs;

11. *Deplores* the use of the print, audio-visual and electronic media, including the Internet, and any other means to incite acts of violence, xenophobia or related intolerance and discrimination towards Islam or any other religion;

12. *Invites* the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance to report on all manifestations of defamation of religions and in particular on the serious implications of Islamophobia on the enjoyment of all rights at its sixth session;

13. *Requests* the High Commissioner for Human Rights to report to the Human Rights Council on the implementation of this resolution at its sixth session.

*Adopted by a recorded vote of 24 to 14,
with 9 abstentions
31st meeting
30 March 2007*
