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**Human Rights Council****Fifty-sixth session**

18 June–12 July 2024

Agenda item 9

**Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, follow-up to and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action****Pakistan\*\* and Singapore:\* draft resolution****56/...Countering religious hatred constituting incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence***The Human Rights Council,**Guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations,**Reaffirming the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination,**Reaffirming also the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion or Belief,**Reaffirming further Human Rights Council resolution 53/1 of 12 July 2023 on countering religious hatred constituting incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, and recalling concerns highlighted during the urgent debate of the Human Rights Council at its fifty-third session,**Acknowledging that the exercise of the right to freedom of expression carries with it special duties and responsibilities and that restrictions on this right shall only be such as are provided by law, and in this context ensuring respect for the rights or reputations of others, as stipulated in article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and acknowledging also its article 20, which states that any advocacy of religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law,**Noting with deep concern the recurring incidents of desecration of and attacks on sacred books, places of worship as well as religious symbols, which could constitute incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence,**Affirming that it is offensive, disrespectful, a clear act of provocation and a manifestation of religious hatred to deliberately and publicly burn the Holy Qur'an or other holy books with the intent to incite discrimination, hostility or violence, and affirming also that this act shall be prohibited by law, in line with the obligations of States arising from international human rights law,*

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\* State not a member of the Human Rights Council.

\*\* On behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.



*Noting* the strong rejection and condemnation of recurring acts of public burning of the Holy Qur'an in some European and other countries, as voiced by States, the Secretary-General, the High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, and many others, and noting also the efforts being made by some countries to address such acts,

*Emphasizing* that all human rights, including freedom of religion or belief, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to peaceful assembly and the right to freedom of association are interdependent, interrelated and mutually reinforcing, and stressing the positive role that these rights can play in the fight against all forms of intolerance and of discrimination based on religion or belief,

*Recalling* that racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance are manifested on the grounds of race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin, and that victims can suffer from multiple or aggravated forms of discrimination based on other related grounds, such as sex, language, religion, disability, political or other opinion, social origin, property, birth or other status,

*Recalling also* Human Rights Council resolution 52/38 of 4 April 2023 on combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against, persons based on religion or belief, and its resolution 55/16 of 4 April 2024 on freedom of religion or belief,

*Taking note* of the Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence,

*Condemning* any advocacy of religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, whether it involves the use of print, audiovisual or electronic media or any other means,

*Recognizing* that gaps may exist in national legal, policy and law enforcement frameworks, impeding prevention and prosecution of and redressal for acts and advocacy of religious hatred that constitute an incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence committed against persons based on religion or belief,

*Acknowledging* that countering religious hatred also requires measures that address its root causes and drivers, such as discrimination, disinformation, acts of provocation that divide societies, instrumentalization of fear for political gain, misuse of social media, as well as further strengthening policies and programmes to promote tolerance and respect for human rights,

*Acknowledging also* that tolerance, pluralistic tradition, mutual respect and the diversity of religions and beliefs promote human fraternity, and in this regard recalling all United Nations resolutions on human fraternity,

*Recognizing* that open, constructive and respectful debate of ideas and interfaith and intercultural dialogue at the local, national and international levels can play a positive role in combating religious hatred, incitement and violence,

1. *Condemns and strongly rejects* any advocacy or manifestation of religious hatred, including the recurring public and premeditated acts of desecration of the Holy Qur'an or other holy books, and underscores the need for holding those responsible to account in a manner consistent with the obligations of States arising from international human rights law;

2. *Calls upon* States to adopt national laws, policies and law enforcement frameworks that address, prevent and prosecute acts and advocacy of religious hatred that constitute incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, and to take immediate steps to ensure accountability;

3. *Also calls upon* States to take necessary measures to address the root causes and drivers of religious hatred constituting incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence;

4. *Calls* for strengthened international efforts to foster a global dialogue for the promotion of a culture of tolerance and peace at all levels, based on respect for human rights and diversity of religion and belief;

5. *Urges* the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and all relevant special procedures of the Human Rights Council and treaty bodies, within their respective mandates, to continue speaking out against advocacy of religious hatred that could constitute incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, and to make recommendations on addressing this phenomenon;

6. *Requests* the High Commissioner to present to the Human Rights Council at its fifty-eighth session an oral update on the interplay between the misuse of social media and religious hatred constituting incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, and good practices that could contribute to upholding the human rights of all persons, in particular in the context of the urgent debate held at the fifty-third session, to be followed by an interactive dialogue;

7. *Decides* to organize an interactive panel discussion of experts at the sixty-first session of the Human Rights Council to explore the human rights impacts of misuse of social media platforms and ways to counter their instrumentalization by those seeking to spread hatred on the basis of religion or belief that could lead to real world discrimination, hostility, violence and stigmatisation, and to propose normative, legal, policy, regulatory and administrative measures, both offline and online, to enable the full enjoyment of the fundamental rights and freedoms of persons, and invites the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to liaise with States, relevant United Nations bodies and agencies, relevant special procedures, civil society and other stakeholders with a view to ensuring their participation in the panel discussion, and that the panel discussion is made accessible to persons with disabilities;

8. *Requests* the Office of the High Commissioner to present a report on the deliberations of the panel discussion to the Human Rights Council at its sixty-second session;

9. *Decides* to remain seized of this matter.

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