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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Forty-fourth session  
Agenda item 23

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE ELIMINATION OF  
ALL FORMS OF INTOLERANCE AND OF DISCRIMINATION BASED ON  
RELIGION OR BELIEF

Addendum to the compendium of the national legislation  
and regulations of States on the question of freedom  
of religion or belief with particular regard to the  
measures taken to combat intolerance or discrimination  
in this field called for by Commission on Human Rights  
resolution 1987/15

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC

[26 January 1988]  
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The Syrian Arab Republic attaches special importance to the question of safeguarding freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief and combating intolerance or discrimination in this connection.

We quote the following texts of articles 25, 35 and 38 of the Syrian Constitution and articles 307, 308, 462 and 463 of the Syrian Criminal Code, which contain the constitutional and penal substantiation of Syria's position in this regard:

Article 25

1. Freedom is a sacred right. The State shall safeguard the personal freedom, dignity and security of its citizens.
2. The sovereignty of the law is a fundamental principle in society and the State.
3. All citizens are equal before the law in regard to their rights and obligations.
4. The State shall safeguard the principle of equality of opportunities for its citizens.

Article 35

1. Freedom of belief is inviolable and the State shall respect all religions.
2. The State shall guarantee freedom to engage in all religious observances in a manner consistent with public order.

Article 38

Every citizen has the right to express his opinion freely and openly, either orally, in writing or through any other medium of expression, and to contribute supervision and constructive criticism in a manner conducive to the integrity of the country and the nation and to the furtherance of the socialist system. The State shall guarantee freedom of the press, printing and publishing in accordance with the law.

Article 307

1. Any act or written or oral communication that is intended to provoke confessional or racial bigotry or incite strife among the various communities and component elements of the nation, or which results in such provocation or incitement, shall be punishable by imprisonment for six months to two years, a fine of 25 to 200 pounds and deprivation of the rights stipulated in the second and fourth paragraphs of article 65.
2. The court may order publication of the sentence.

Article 308

1. Any person who belongs to an association that has been established for the purpose referred to in the preceding article shall be liable to the same penalties.

2. If the said person holds a functional post in the association, the period of imprisonment shall not be less than one year and the fine shall not be less than 100 pounds.

3. The above penalties shall be in addition to the court order concerning the dissolution of the association and the confiscation of its property in accordance with articles 609 and 69.

Article 462

Any person who, in any of the ways specified in article 208, denigrates religious observances that are performed in public or who incites others to denigrate any such observances shall be punished by imprisonment for a period of two months to two years.

Article 463

A penalty of imprisonment for a period of one month to one year shall be imposed on:

(a) Any person who disrupts, or uses acts of violence or threats to impede, the practice of any religious rites, celebrations or associated observances.

(b) Any person who destroys, damages, defaces, desecrates or defiles a place of religious worship, a religious symbol or any other object that is venerated by the members of a religious community or group of people.