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### Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General

**Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related  
forms of intolerance: follow-up to and implementation  
of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action**

## **Combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief**

### **Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights\***

#### *Summary*

The present report is submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 37/38, in which the Council requested the High Commissioner to prepare and submit to the Council at its fortieth session a comprehensive follow-up report with elaborated conclusions based upon information provided by States on the efforts and measures taken for the implementation of the action plan outlined in paragraphs 7 and 8 of resolution 37/38 and views on potential follow-up measures for further improvement of the implementation of the plan.

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\* Agreement was reached to publish the present report after the standard publication date owing to circumstances beyond the submitter's control.



## **I. Introduction**

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 37/38 entitled “Combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against, persons based on religion or belief” in which the Council requested the High Commissioner to prepare and submit to it at its fortieth session a comprehensive follow-up report with elaborated conclusions based upon information provided by States on the efforts and measures taken for the implementation of the action plan outlined in paragraphs 7 and 8 of the resolution and views on potential follow-up measures for further improvement of the implementation of that plan.

2. The report is based on contributions received from 16 Member States in reply to a note verbale issued by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).<sup>1</sup> In section II below, those contributions are summarized under headings that correspond to the points of the action plan in paragraphs 7 and 8 of resolution 37/38, bearing in mind that some of the information received from some States on their implementation of the action plan has been reflected in previous reports on the same topic, most recently the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly (A/73/153).<sup>2</sup> Section III provides some observations and views on potential follow-up measures for further improvement in the implementation of the action plan.

## **II. Implementation of the action plan: information received from Member States**

### **A. Constitutional and legislative frameworks**

3. OHCHR received comprehensive submissions from Bahrain, Belarus, Italy, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kuwait, Montenegro, Qatar, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in relation to constitutional and legislative frameworks present in those countries pertaining to combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief. A number of countries noted important constitutional and legislative amendments relative to discrimination on the basis of religion or belief, which had recently been adopted.

4. While noting the significance of domestic constitutional and legislative frameworks, the High Commissioner wishes to stress the need for improved implementation of those frameworks to counter discrimination, intolerance and violence based on religion or belief. In tandem with the frameworks, practical actions taken by Governments and stakeholders reach victims of discrimination and religious communities that have been affected and serve to promote a culture of tolerance and peace domestically.

### **B. Extremism and radicalization**

5. Under the action plan, some States are addressing extremism and radicalization. The High Commissioner encourages them to increase awareness and understanding of those

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<sup>1</sup> The full texts of the submissions by Argentina, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Belarus, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Italy, Kuwait, Montenegro, Qatar, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Togo, Turkey, Ukraine and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland are available from <https://adsdatabase.ohchr.org/SitePages/Anti-discrimination%20database.aspx>.

<sup>2</sup> Not all points of the action plan are reflected in the present report, as relevant information was not received from Member States.

phenomena, ensuring that such information is easily available, widely disseminated and used to develop and improve policies aimed at combating them.

6. Italy reported that its General Investigations and Special Operations Division continuously monitors environments marked by “political extremism”, with a view to timely interception and prevention of illegal actions. The operations are addressed to a variety of situations connected with the radical right wing, in order to fight and prosecute all types of situations, behaviours or ideological dissemination by groups and movements inspired by Nazi-fascist principles and by racial, ethnic or religious discrimination. There is a special focus on behaviour which violates specific legislation such as the Scelba Law No. 645/1952 and the Mancino Law No. 205/1993 and their amendments.

7. The Russian Federation reported that it took all necessary measures to prevent the creation and activities on its territory of organizations and movements based on xenophobic ideologies and calling for discrimination and violence against persons on the basis of religious affiliation. It noted that various manifestations of such intolerance have been prosecuted under the Federal Law of July 25, 2002 No. 114-3 “On countering extremist activities”, whereby the incitement to social, racial, national or religious hatred is recognized as extremist activity.

8. It added that considerable attention was paid to preventing the spread of radicalism among young people. The Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, together with the National Anti-Terrorism Committee and the Federal Institute for the Development of Education, have developed guidelines for the employees and management of educational organizations to counter the spread of extremism in youth environments, as well as a set of measures to prevent extremism and xenophobia.

9. Interactive programmes for the prevention of extremism and of discriminatory behaviour by students (aged 14 to 21 years), entitled “Zero discrimination”, have been created.<sup>3</sup> The “Science and education against terror” portal, developed with 42 Russian higher education institutions, publishes materials to counter terrorist ideology.<sup>4</sup> The Internet resource entitled “Interactive map of anti-terrorism activities in educational organizations and scientific institutions of the Russian Federation” has been functioning since 2016.

10. Qatar reported that it undertook education and awareness-raising programmes in order to prevent the manifestation of extremism in society. It reported that its official approach was based on values of peace and a rejection of violence and extremism. There were many projects promoting religious freedom to support this approach.

11. Saudi Arabia reported that the first Arab Islamic American Summit had taken place in Riyadh in 2017, establishing the International Centre to Fight Extremism with the strategic objective of fighting intellectual, media and digital extremism and promoting coexistence and tolerance among people.

12. The High Commissioner recalls that measures taken to combat religious intolerance and violent extremism should reflect the principles of inclusiveness and participation. They should take gender into account and be adapted to the domestic context. Key concepts related to violent extremism should be clearly defined, particularly when they can potentially trigger measures that may impinge on human rights, for example when the terms “extremism” or “radicalization” are used to cover non-violent activity.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> See, for example, <http://tolerancecenter.ru/vserossiyskiy-urok-2018/>.

<sup>4</sup> See <http://scienceport.ru/>.

<sup>5</sup> Additional guidance is to be found in the Secretary-General’s Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (A/70/674) and the High Commissioner’s report on best practices and lessons learned on how protecting and promoting human rights contribute to preventing and countering violent extremism (A/HRC/33/29).

**C. Creating collaborative networks to build mutual understanding, promoting dialogue and inspiring constructive action towards shared policy goals and the pursuit of tangible outcomes, such as servicing projects in the fields of education, health, conflict prevention, employment, integration and media education<sup>6</sup>**

13. In Argentina, the National Institute against Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racism organized, together with the Centro de Estudios e Investigaciones Laborales CONICET, a conference on religious discrimination and good practices for its prevention. The Institute also places emphasis on the responsible use of new technologies in generating digital environments free from discrimination. A campaign was developed, together with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), under the slogan #NODACOMPARTIR and a digital document on the subject was designed. The campaign has had a broad impact on social networks and national, provincial and regional media.

14. The Government of Australia implemented the fostering integration grants scheme, which provides grants to community organizations to assist migrants. It prioritizes activities that assist young people and women. The "Strong and resilient communities" grants programme funds projects aimed at, inter alia, strengthening community leadership to foster greater community cohesion, addressing racial, cultural or religious tensions between particular groups in the community through educational, social, cultural or sporting activities and providing youth at risk of marginalization with access to services that aim to build trust and increase their community participation.

15. In Azerbaijan, the State Committee on Religious Associations carries out State policy and implements various awareness-raising measures aimed at protecting and strengthening traditions of multiculturalism, tolerance, peaceful coexistence, friendship and mutual respect between various religious communities. The Committee, together with the relevant State authorities and non-governmental organizations, regularly addresses topics such as the prevention of intolerance, discrimination, confrontation, violence amongst members of different religions or belief and strengthening tolerance in the activities of religious communities.

16. In Bahrain, the Ministry of Justice, Islamic Affairs and Islamic Properties works in coordination with the Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs, which consists of Sunni and Jafari scholars, to organize events such as seminars, conferences and workshops and training for imams, preachers and other speakers in mosques. Scientific encounters and workshops were organized between 2007 and 2016.

17. Belarus reported that the Commissioner for Religious and Ethnic Affairs, coordinated the work of national communities and faiths, as well as the work of the interdepartmental working group on the improvement of public policy in the sphere of national relations, examining the implementation of regional programmes and activities for the development of the ethnic and religious sphere.

18. The Islamic Republic of Iran reported that it had taken steps to encourage mutual respect and understanding between members of majority populations and religious minorities, inviting cultural elites and thinkers to hold various discussions, including several interreligious dialogues. It noted two international Islamic unity conferences, held in Tehran in 2015 and 2016 with the participation of Islamic scholars and thinkers from various religions, and several scientific seminars, symposiums and panels involving scholars, both at home and abroad.

19. Italy reported that the Committee for the restoration of block 21 of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum and for the establishment of a new Italian exhibition is working to propose to the President of the Council a comprehensive project for the restoration of the museum and the establishment of the exhibition by the beginning of 2019. In commemoration of Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January 2018, the Presidency of the

<sup>6</sup> Paragraph 7 (a) of resolution 37/38.

Council of Ministers, together with the Union of Jewish Communities, organized in Rome a round table on the theme of “True legality – since 1938 to 80 years after the approval of the provisions for the protection of the race”. Similarly, the National Office Against Racial Discrimination and the Foundation-Museum of the Shoah organized an exhibition entitled “1938 – the history” in five Italian municipalities to commemorate the eightieth anniversary of the promulgation of racial laws through unpublished and original photos, posters, documents and newspapers from several public and private archives. A visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau was organized, involving 100 students from Italian schools and 40 members of the National Forum of Roma, Sinti and Caminanti Communities, the Union of Jewish Communities and the Superior Council of the Judiciary.

20. Montenegro reported that in 2018, the Directorate for Relations with Religious Communities of the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights prepared a questionnaire on “The impact of religious education on the formation of moral values of the student population” intended to explore the relationship between moral norms and religious principles, with results used to design guidelines for the work of the Directorate and published on the Ministry website and in printed form as a special brochure.

21. Turkey reported that since 2014, the Government had participated in the European Union education, youth and sports programme Erasmus +, which promotes the values of freedom, inclusion, tolerance and non-discrimination as set out in the Paris Declaration on promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education of 17 March 2015.

#### **D. Creating an appropriate mechanism within Governments to, inter alia, identify and address potential areas of tension between members of different religious communities, and assisting with conflict prevention and mediation<sup>7</sup>**

22. In 2013, for the second series of statistics on discrimination in the country the National Institute against Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Racism in Argentina developed a “national map of discrimination” in order to collect, analyse, disseminate and publish reliable statistical data at national and local levels, and assess the situation of individuals and groups of people who are victims of discrimination. Work is currently being carried out on the third edition of the “map”.

23. The Institute has established a round table on interreligious dialogue that meets monthly and is made up of representatives of different cults, religions and world views. In the meetings, an analysis is made of the current problems of religious diversity, inclusive public policies are encouraged, dialogue is promoted between religious and lay communities, and good practices in each group are highlighted. In situations of hostility, communication and conflict resolution networks can be generated between the participants and the State on a monthly basis.

24. In Australia, the community liaison officer network engages with diverse communities across Australia, including religious groups and key stakeholders, to foster productive and collaborative relationships and to promote a productive and diverse multicultural society. This engagement assists the Government in identifying potential areas of tension between members of different religious communities and in facilitating comprehensive government outreach to diverse communities.

25. In Italy, the Central Directorate of the Prevention Police cooperating with the Observatory for Security against Discrimination is a central body tasked with monitoring and fighting discrimination against all minorities. Together they issue an annual report for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) which provides, inter alia, statistics on discrimination in Italy and outlines specific legislation and possible amendments.

<sup>7</sup> Paragraph 7 (b) of resolution 37/38.

26. Montenegro reported that the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights had organized seven conferences last year, at which representatives from the academic community, religious organizations and national institutions met to strengthen interreligious dialogue and improve cooperation between the Ministry and religious communities. The conferences were held in the southern and northern parts of Montenegro and Ministry officials visited Orthodox, Islamic and Catholic religious communities in the regions where the conferences were held. In addition to posting the conference outcomes for the general public on the Ministry web portal, the official proceedings from conferences held in 2018 will be published.

27. In the Russian Federation under the aegis of the President, the Council for Interaction with Religious Associations operates the Commission for Religious Associations. The Interreligious Council of Russia, coordinates the efforts of religious associations in developing relations between religions, society and the State, strengthening public morality, preserving and recreating the spiritual and cultural heritage of the peoples of Russia and organizing and supporting interfaith dialogue on socially important and other related problems, in cooperation with international interreligious organizations.

28. Ukraine reported that in 2018, the Government had continued its work in consultation with the Commission on the Implementation of the Rights of Religious Organizations, an advisory body located under the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. The Commission, headed by a Vice Prime Minister, also includes representatives of the Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant, Jewish and Muslim religious organizations of Ukraine. The work of the Commission is to ensure effective interaction between the State and religious organizations in solving topical issues of State-confessional relations and implement the priority tasks of the State policy of Ukraine in the sphere of religion.

## **E. Training of government officials in effective outreach strategies<sup>8</sup>**

29. In Argentina, the National Institute against Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Racism integrates specialized agencies within the framework of the network of institutional social responsibility of the Ministry of Modernization of the Nation that promotes the training of public administration employees in matters of health, environment, volunteering and inclusion.

30. In Australia, training is delivered to the government network of community liaison officers, a primary conduit between the Government and culturally, religiously and linguistically diverse community organizations and leaders. The training helps officers to develop relevant knowledge, skills and attributes for engaging effectively with members of the community and non-governmental organizations.

31. In Italy, to increase the knowledge of the basic principles of Judaism amongst police officers, the Observatory for Security against Discrimination co-operated with the Union of Jewish communities to produce a guide to Judaism for police officers that will soon be launched.

32. In Saudi Arabia, training is carried out by governmental entities and co-programmed with educational institutions, for penal, justice and law enforcement officials and there is also training for workers, investigators and army personnel to improve their legal knowledge and capacity to investigate all areas of crime. In its submission, Saudi Arabia noted the security studies course at the Nayef Arab University for Security Sciences, the King Fahd Security College and a recent memorandum of understanding on technical cooperation and capacity-building with OHCHR, with the objective of building the capacity of experts in international human rights law.

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<sup>8</sup> Paragraph 7 (c) of resolution 37/38.

## **F. Adopting measures to criminalize incitement to imminent violence based on religion or belief<sup>9</sup>**

33. Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Belarus, Italy, Kuwait, Montenegro, Qatar, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia and Turkey reported on comprehensive criminal frameworks prohibiting incitement to violence based on religion or belief. In those frameworks issues of incitement to racial, national or religious hatred through speech or written media and publications, including dissemination through the Internet, are addressed. Those legal frameworks generally also covered the establishment of or participation in organizations which urge violence or incite religious hatred and public meetings in that context; the denial of war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity; and linkages between incitement and acts of terrorism. They usually provided for strong criminal regimes with concomitant heavy sentences.

34. The High Commissioner wishes to recall that where legal sanctions may be necessary to protect human beings against incitement to hatred, discrimination or acts of violence, three types of expression should be clearly distinguished: expression that constitutes a criminal offence; expression that is not criminally punishable, but may justify civil or administrative sanctions; and expression that does not invoke any legal action but still raises concern in terms of tolerance and respect for the rights of others.

35. Legislation prohibiting incitement to racial, national and religious hatred should be specific and not overly broad in its scope and application, to be consistent with the international standards on freedom of religion or belief and freedom of opinion and expression. States should also ensure that there is no impunity in the judicial system where prosecution and adjudication of such crimes are undertaken.

36. Some useful guidance is provided in the Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence and its six-part threshold test. Development of what the threshold entails and what is considered to be advocacy of religious hatred constituting incitement is under way. The expert conclusions and recommendations of the Rabat Plan of Action, based on legislative patterns and judicial practices and policies, can provide some guidance to stakeholders, including national legislatures and the judiciary, in implementing the international standards relating to the prohibition of incitement to racial, national and religious hatred.

## **G. Hate crimes**

37. In Italy, the Observatory for Security against Discrimination undertakes training of police officers in order to increase their awareness of hate crime, hate speech and human rights and their competence to deal with it. The number of hours of training provided by the national police has been increased to 10 periods of 45 minutes each for constables and 27 periods of pre-service training for inspectors. The Observatory participates in European and international projects concerning hate crime, and in this context seminars on prevention of hate crime are organized for both the national police and the carabinieri. Italy highlighted its cooperation with the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights in the implementation of the “training against hate crime for law enforcement” programme, through which 185 officers were trained between 2014 and 2016.

38. Turkey reported that arrangements regarding hate crimes had been introduced to the Turkish Criminal Code so as to ensure harmonization with international and European standards. Article 122 of the Criminal Code on hate and discrimination, prohibits discrimination on the grounds of language, race, nationality, colour, sex, disability, political opinion, philosophical belief, religion and sect, and provides for imprisonment or fines for persons discriminating on the grounds listed above.

<sup>9</sup> Paragraph 7 (f) of resolution 37/38.

39. The United Kingdom reported that its legislative framework protected individuals and groups from being the target of religiously motivated hatred, including incitement to religiously motivated hatred. The framework is supported by a cross-Government hate crime action plan, which includes funding support for community-led projects in schools and places of worship aimed at tackling prejudice, and setting up ongoing funding for dedicated anti-Muslim hatred reporting and victim support organization. Government funding is also provided for security measures at places of worship across the different faiths in Britain, with hundreds of faith institutions having benefited from this to date. The government work to combat hate against different faiths is supported by high-level working groups from the major faith groups made up of eminent representatives from civil society, business and academia.

40. On this particular topic, OHCHR works with States and other stakeholders on substantive support for implementing international standards and practical measures at the national level. For example, OHCHR has supported the organization of relevant training and meetings in Lebanon, Malaysia, Morocco, Oman, Senegal and Tunisia, and with media professionals from the Russian Federation, Ukraine and West Africa.

#### **H. Understanding the need to combat denigration and negative religious stereotyping of persons and incitement to religious hatred by strategizing and harmonizing actions at the local, national, regional and international levels through, inter alia, education and awareness-building<sup>10</sup>**

41. In Argentina, the National Institute against Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Racism relaunched its virtual campus online platform in 2018.<sup>11</sup> The platform is a training space on anti-discrimination issues offering a large number of courses on the different topics addressed by the Institute. The digital content available includes manuals of good practices in communication matters for journalists and materials on discrimination in general and specific to the themes developed by the Institute.<sup>12</sup>

42. The Institute is part of the Ibero-American Network of Agencies and Organizations against Discrimination, which consists of 58 members representing regional and international governmental bodies, non-governmental organizations and academic institutions from 18 countries in the region. The Network works with civil society and other countries to contribute to the processes of exchange, reflection, approach and cooperation, fostering joint efforts to combat discrimination throughout the Ibero-American region.

43. In coordination with the Institute the Directorate of Policies against Discrimination organized a federal debate on denial of the genocide suffered by the Jewish and Armenian peoples, in order to share their history, the tragic events suffered by the two communities and the maintenance of historical and collective memory as a way to fight against discrimination and hatred and educate societies.

44. In Bahrain, specialists at the Ministry of Justice, Islamic Affairs and Islamic Properties analyse Friday speeches and sermons in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, such as scholars in the field of sharia, with respect to dissemination of and incitement to hatred and violence and direct politicization from the podium. Further to decision 23 of 2009 on the ethics of religious speech, the charter on the work of the preacher, requires signature by all individuals who receive a licence to preach in Bahrain. Bahrain reported that a number of administrative measures had been taken against preachers and speakers who had not respected the charter, including the withdrawal of four licences and some speakers/preachers being obliged to stop working.

45. Italy reported that in 2018 it had assumed the Chair of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. Supported and funded by the Presidency of the Council of

<sup>10</sup> Paragraph 7 (g) of resolution 37/38.

<sup>11</sup> See <http://campus.inadi.gob.ar/>.

<sup>12</sup> <http://inadi.gob.ar/contenidos-digitales/>.



Ministers, Italy chaired its first biannual plenary meeting in Rome, at which more than 200 experts and governmental representatives met to discuss the Holocaust as a contemporary political issue. Noting that media communication may often inspire negative stereotypes and prejudices concerning the reception of migrants, hindering their integration process and causing breeding grounds for social conflict, the national integration plan for Italy envisages the promotion of a dialogue with asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection, to be carried out on social media and networks.

46. Saudi Arabia reported that the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Dawah and Guidance prepared documents and instructions for imams and preachers to the effect that they must not despise or attack other persons or religions, and organized specialized symposiums and training for them. The Ministry recently concluded an agreement with the King Abdul Aziz Centre for National Dialogue to train imams to play their role in society through speeches and participation in conferences. It added that the media works towards strengthening the values of Islamic sharia and the promotion of equality and fighting religious discrimination in conformity with the Constitution and other regulations. Several campaigns have been launched to disseminate information about international human rights law standards, and media programming involves experts and specialists in human rights.

## **I. Recognizing that the 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<sup>13</sup>**

47. Azerbaijan hosts regular international forums and conferences dedicated to issues of multiculturalism, to foster interreligious dialogue and understanding. It noted that 2016 was announced as the Year of Multiculturalism and in 2017 Baku had hosted the fourth Islamic Solidarity Games as part of Islamic Solidarity Year. The World Summit of Religious Leaders, the fourth World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue and the Baku International Humanitarian Forum had all been held in Azerbaijan.

48. In June 2018, the Government of Australia announced a new term for an expanded Australian Multicultural Council (2018–2021), which would focus on strengthening public understanding of a shared Australian identity, building stronger and more cohesive communities and promoting greater intercultural and interfaith understanding and dialogue. The Government also promotes the celebration of Harmony Day throughout Australia on 21 March as a day of cultural respect for everyone. Community-driven events are central to these celebrations.

49. Bahrain reported that the King Hamad Global Centre for Peaceful Coexistence had been launched in Los Angeles, United States of America, in 2017. In November 2016, the King Hamad Chair in Interfaith Dialogue and Peaceful Coexistence had been established at Sapienza University, Italy, to reach young people all over the world and provide knowledge and inspiration to invoke peaceful coexistence.

50. Qatar reported that the Doha International Centre for Interfaith Dialogue had hosted the Doha Conference for Interfaith Dialogue annually for the last 13 years under the patronage of the Emir of Qatar and supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The most recent conference had taken place on 20 to 21 February 2018 on the theme of “Religions and human rights”. In 2018, the Centre had continued to support and organize various activities, including issuing publications and interfaith journals, youth forums, sports tournaments, workshops, book fairs, cultural and literary events, training and cultural dialogues in Doha and around the world. Memorandums of understanding had been signed between the Centre and the Centre for Islamic Studies, Dushanbe, under the auspices of the President of Tajikistan in February 2018, and with the Global Forum for Moderation in March 2018. It also reported that the Ramadan Interfaith Conference had taken place in June 2018.

<sup>13</sup> Paragraph 7 (h) of resolution 37/38.

51. The Qatar Commission for the Alliance of Civilizations promotes the aims of different civilizations to cooperate at the regional and international level and endeavours to promote the contribution of Islamic civilizations to human development. It has a role in the resolution of conflicts, the reaffirmation of tolerance, solidarity, and peace among civilizations and in fighting extremism and intolerance. There is also an Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Chair for the Alliance of Civilizations at the Faculty of Sharia and Islamic Studies, University of Qatar.

52. Through its cultural village Katara, Qatar is a space in the Middle East for the arts, conferences, music and exhibitions looking to the future of people from different cultures to overcome national and cultural barriers and promote unity and humanity. There are different festivals held where many cultures are represented.

53. In Qatar, the Ministry of Communication published a guide to moral responsibility in the digital world to raise awareness of the importance of good speech through different media, including social media. Discussions were held with young people and different stakeholders working on the issues of morality and information technology.

54. The Russian Federation reported that it encouraged multinational organizations and movements, as well as activities aimed at the eradication of racial barriers and the creation of conditions for a dialogue of cultures and religions. Concerts of folk and ethnic music, master classes of folk art, research and dialogue events had been regularly organized. State support had been provided for the activities of national cultural entities and national cultural centres, as well as activities carried out by regional authorities in the field of culture and tourism, preservation and development of the traditional culture of the peoples of Russia.

55. Saudi Arabia reported that the King Abdul Aziz Centre for National Dialogue encouraged better understanding of the values of Islamic sharia, dialogue on tolerance, respect for the principle of equality and moderation and the dissemination of such values, and peaceful coexistence between nations and peoples. It noted the importance of the “Declaration of the Islamic Summit Conference on Islamic solidarity in Mecca” and the Riyadh Declaration on the Counter-Terrorism International Conference in 2005 (A/60/426).

56. In Ukraine, pursuant to article 30 of the Law of Ukraine on freedom of conscience and religious organizations, State policy in the sphere of religions includes promoting the participation of religious organizations of Ukraine in contacts with international religious centres and foreign religious organizations. Ukraine reported that the purpose of such activities was to facilitate the unification of the three separate Orthodox jurisdictions in the territory of Ukraine into a single and independent Orthodox church. In 2018, the leadership of Ukraine had undertaken efforts to establish international State-confessional relations, in particular with the Ecumenical Orthodoxy, associated with the process of promoting the constitution of a single Orthodox Church in Ukraine, in order to receive independent status.

**J. Effective measures to ensure that public functionaries, in the conduct of their public duties, do not discriminate against an individual on the basis of religion or belief<sup>14</sup>**

57. Saudi Arabia reported that Islamic sharia was the source of all rules and regulations such that employees in the course of their public duties were sanctioned more strictly if a crime was perpetrated causing racism or hatred on grounds of sex, nationality, religion or social status. It noted the Law on Domestic Workers, adopted by the Council of Ministers in decision 210 (2013), adding that article 2 of the Health Code (Royal decree No. 11) required that medical care be given to all residents in an equitable manner, that Royal decree No. 59 on article 5 required that health workers must respect the right to life, health and dignity and non-exploitation and that article 2 of the Penal Code (2013) prohibited physical and psychological attacks and arrests, torture and undignified treatment.

<sup>14</sup> Paragraph 8 (a) of resolution 37/38.

58. Togo reported that it had taken effective measures to ensure that, in the exercise of their functions, public officials did not discriminate against an individual on the basis of his or her religion or belief. In paragraph 3 of article 153, the General Statute of the Civil Service provided “that no action or administrative decision taken by or against a staff member can be based on regional, tribal, ethnic, political or religious considerations” and, in paragraph 4 “the official must, in all circumstances, perform his or her duties impartially, without any discrimination against public service users, and refrain from any behaviour likely to cast doubt on the neutrality of the public service”.

59. In Turkey, article 7 of Law No. 657 on civil servants provides that discrimination by civil servants when performing their duties is prohibited on the grounds of, among other things, religion and sect. Turkey reported that within the framework of the in-service training plan of the Turkish National Police, 49,040 personnel had been trained in human rights between January and November 2018.

**K. Fostering religious freedom and pluralism by promoting the ability of members of all religious communities to manifest their religion, and to contribute openly and on an equal footing to society<sup>15</sup>**

60. In Australia the Human Rights Subcommittee of the parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade is currently undertaking an inquiry into the protection and promotion of the human right to freedom of religion or belief worldwide, including in Australia.<sup>16</sup> Australia reported that the inquiry had received nearly 700 submissions. In November 2017, the Subcommittee had released an interim report, entitled “Legal foundations of religious freedom in Australia” focusing on the current status of laws protecting the freedom of religion or belief in Australia. It had held further public hearings to examine challenges to freedom of religion or belief and to determine whether Australian protection for the human right to freedom of religion or belief required further strengthening in the light of those challenges. That same month, the Government had appointed the Chair of an expert panel on religious freedom to examine whether rights relating to religious freedom were adequately protected under Australian law. The Government was now considering the findings of the expert panel review.

61. Azerbaijan reported that no cases of confrontation had been registered among religious communities in the country. Representatives of different religious communities had assisted each other financially in the construction of places of worship and in the organization of religious holidays. It also reported that 861 religious communities (830 Islamic; 20 Christian; 8 Jewish; 1 Krishna and 2 Baha’i) had been registered in the country and that the State had created the necessary conditions for all religious communities. Regular financial aid was allocated to various religious organizations, including for the purposes of renovation and reconstruction of places of worship. In 2018, under a presidential decree, funds had been allocated from the President’s Reserve Fund to religious organizations functioning in Azerbaijan. Various places of worship had been constructed or restored, both within Azerbaijan and internationally within the framework of the “Azerbaijan – address of tolerance” project.

62. Bahrain reported that the Ministry of Justice, Islamic Affairs and Islamic Properties was responsible for Muslims and regulated places of worship and cemeteries, as well as the freedom to practice religion. It independently managed places of worship and properties in respect of Sunni Muslims and Jafari Muslims in the country. The Ministry of Labour and Social Development was responsible for non-Muslims and regulations pertaining to their places of worship and cemeteries. It also registered non-governmental organizations, including those owned by non-Muslims. Under Law 21 of 1989 on cultural and social associations and clubs, 19 churches and places of worship had been registered by October 2018.

<sup>15</sup> Paragraph 8 (b) of resolution 37/38.

<sup>16</sup> See [www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Joint/Foreign\\_Affairs\\_Defence\\_and\\_Trade/Freedomofreligion/Terms\\_of\\_Reference](http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Foreign_Affairs_Defence_and_Trade/Freedomofreligion/Terms_of_Reference).

63. Belarus reported that the Commissioner for Religious and Ethnic Affairs coordinated the work of national communities and faiths, including advisory interfaith and inter-ethnic councils. The Ombudsman for Religion and Nationalities monitored the observance of legislation protecting the rights of persons who identify themselves as a national community, addressed violations and promoted the development of ethno-confessional dialogue. Belarus had implemented programmes for the development of the confessional sphere of national relations and cooperation with entities abroad for the period 2016–2020. The programme aimed to regulate religious life, maintaining interreligious and inter-ethnic peace and accord in society and developing cooperation between State departments and religious organizations in providing assistance to citizens to exercise their rights to national-cultural development and national identity.

64. The Islamic Republic of Iran reported that as of January 2016, 58 religious minorities associations were active: Jewish (3); Zoroastrian (29); Christians (Armenians) (17); and Christians (Assyrians) (9). Article 13 of the Constitution recognized the right to celebrate religious ceremonies and their related holidays for minorities and their followers in governmental departments. Those undertaking compulsory military service were allowed to take leave during official ceremonies. Religious minorities benefited from the country's official holidays in addition to special leave on the days of religious ceremonies.

65. The Islamic Republic of Iran reported that more than 250 churches were owned by Christian minorities, 16 synagogues by Jewish minorities and 78 places of worship by Zoroastrians. In addition, the religious places of religious minorities were refurbished by the Government from the public budget and some historic locations were nationally registered. It added that religious minorities owned 20 newspapers, weeklies, monthlies and magazines as well as 5 printing and publishing centres. Government funds had been allocated through the national budget to provide services and conveniences for religious minorities and a variety of financial aids had been granted, including funds for the construction of a stadium for the Armenian religious minority in Tehran in 2016.

66. The Islamic Republic of Iran also reported that religious minorities could choose to attend public schools or their own schools and that there were currently 93 schools belonging to religious minorities operating in the country. In 2016, the parliament had passed a law enabling minorities to establish their own schools. In support of minority literature and cultures, there were also higher education courses in Iranian universities, such as the BA in Armenian language and literature at the universities of Azad and Isfahan. Iran added that Sunni Muslims were not considered an official religious minority but as part of the majority. Pursuant to article 12 of the Constitution, they were free to perform their rituals and religious teachings. The President appointed a Sunni counsellor, not only to facilitate communication, but also to address the issues of the Sunni population.

67. Italy reported that in 2018, the two draft texts of (intesa) agreements with the Diocesi Ortodossa Romena d'Italia and with the Association Chiesa d'Inghilterra, agreed by the Interministerial Commission for Agreements with Religious Denominations, had been sent to the new Under-Secretary of State of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and to the respective representatives of the religious denominations for their joint signature. Once signed by the President of Council and the representatives of the religious denomination, each agreement would be transmitted to the parliament for its approval.

68. In Montenegro, the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights had received from the courts data on the number of initiated or ongoing procedures in the courts relating to protection against discrimination based on religion or belief. The Ministry continued to allocate material resources to religious communities in Montenegro each year.

69. In the Russian Federation, the concept and forms of religious associations, as well as guarantees of their activities were enshrined in the law on freedom of conscience, which established guarantees of mutual non-interference of the State and religious associations, and which clearly stated that all religious associations were equal before the law. The Russian Federation reported that the State did not interfere in a citizen's practice of religion and religious affiliation, or in the raising of children by parents or guardians, in accordance with their convictions and taking into account the child's right to freedom of conscience and freedom of religion. The State did not interfere in the activities of religious

associations, as long as they were not in contradiction with the legislation, and it ensured the secular nature of education in State and municipal educational institutions.

70. Turkey reported that steps had been taken in the field of education and culture for non-Muslim citizens. In addition, through amendments made to the Turkish Criminal Code, sanctions on preventing persons from individual worship and fulfilling requirements of religious belief had been introduced into the Code under article 115 on the prevention of freedom of belief, thought and opinion. Article 6 of the electricity market law No. 6446 (2013) required that the lighting expenses of places of worship be paid from the budget of the Presidency of Religious Affairs. In line with article 6, the lighting expenses of churches and synagogues meeting the legal requirements were paid by the Presidency of Religious Affairs upon application to the offices of the provincial muftiates. In 2018, aside from mosques, 394 churches, 3 chapels and 36 synagogues, had benefited from this provision.

71. Ukraine reported that in 2018, in the context of the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Ukrainian revolution, a number of events had been held to celebrate the historical tradition of the activities of the State body for the affairs of religions and nationalities in Ukraine. Two all-Ukrainian scientific-practical conferences had been held on the themes of “The State body on religious affairs in Ukraine: history and modernity” and “Approval of tolerance in the religious and national context during the independence of Ukraine” in June and November 2018 respectively. Representatives of religious organizations in Ukraine had participated in the work of the conferences.

## **L. Encouraging the representation and meaningful participation of individuals, irrespective of their religion, in all sectors of society<sup>17</sup>**

72. Argentina reported that practices in employment and the work environment were underpinned by prejudices constructed by negative value judgments and stigmatization of specific social groups and/or stereotypes extended to a whole group. The National Institute against Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racism worked with civil society organizations and companies in order to achieve inclusive labour relations. It had disseminated information on the subject and had edited a book entitled Management of Diversity in Organizations.

73. In Australia, the multicultural access and equity policy obliged government departments and agencies to ensure that their policies, programmes and services were accessible to and delivered equitable outcomes for all eligible Australians, regardless of their cultural, religious or linguistic backgrounds, with the aim of ensuring that all Australians had the opportunity to achieve their potential and participate in the social, economic and cultural life of the country.

74. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, arrangements had been made to preserve the rights of minorities and guarantee their political participation and contribution in decision-making. Representatives of religious minorities were also present in urban and rural councils. In July 2018, the parliament passed a reform bill, allowing members of religious minorities to stand for Islamic city council elections. After rejection of the bill by the Guardian Council, the parliament referred the bill to the Expediency Council, which had finally approved it.

<sup>17</sup> Paragraph 8 (c) of resolution 37/38.

**M. Making a strong effort to counter religious profiling, which is understood to be the invidious use of religion as a criterion in conducting questioning, searches and other law enforcement investigative procedures<sup>18</sup>**

75. Italy reported that basic legislation concerning the administration of public security activities expressly prohibited data collection on the grounds of race, religion, political opinion, adherence to trade unions, cooperatives and care and cultural associations, and membership in such organizations. The Anti-crime General Directorate of the Police coordinated education and training for police officers, especially those working within the justice system. Since 2013, a specific module on discriminatory profiling in police activities had been introduced into training programmes run by the Observatory for Security against Discrimination to increase the awareness of police officers.

76. Italy reported that cases of discrimination against beneficiaries of international protection were increasing in Italy. Direct or indirect discriminatory actions were directed against asylum seekers, beneficiaries of international protection, foreign unaccompanied minors and more broadly against women and foreign minors. The national integration plan, approved in September 2018, provided specific training to social services and medical personnel, such as social workers, civil registry officials, medical doctors, nurses and municipal and State police. Proposed by the National Anti-Racial Discrimination Office, another specific anti-discrimination initiative, funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, had been launched. It was aimed at encouraging municipalities and other territorial bodies to join the national network of anti-discrimination centres preventing and combating ethnic and racial discrimination in the provision of public utilities, which were sponsored by the National Anti-Racial Discrimination Office; an awareness-raising and information campaign for third country nationals who were possible victims of discrimination; specific training for civil servants; and measures to prevent and combat discrimination.

**III. Activities undertaken by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in support of implementation of the action plan**

77. In addition to the actions reflected above, OHCHR works on the various dimensions of religious intolerance, including multiple discrimination, xenophobia, migration, religious freedom, religious profiling and incitement to racial, national or religious hatred.

78. The High Commissioner for Human Rights has spoken out in various public forums, including the Human Rights Council. Upon request, OHCHR reviews draft anti-discrimination laws and constitutional amendments and has supported several countries and specialized bodies in developing national action plans against racism.

79. OHCHR manages a database that includes information on issues of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.<sup>19</sup> It also develops guidelines and training manuals for judges and conducts training related to the points in the action plan outlined in Human Rights Council resolution 37/38. Through its field presences, related activities have taken place in countries including Lebanon, Malaysia, Morocco, Oman, Senegal and Tunisia and with journalists from the Russian Federation, Ukraine and West Africa, to counter xenophobia and hate speech.

80. From 6 to 7 December 2017, the Rabat+5 Symposium offered an opportunity for stakeholders to engage with experts who had contributed to the elaboration of the Rabat Plan of Action and the 18 commitments on Faith for Rights and to exchange experiences in the area of combating violence on the basis of religion. The broad and diverse participation

<sup>18</sup> Paragraph 8 (d) of resolution 37/38.

<sup>19</sup> See <https://adsdatabase.ohchr.org>.

in the Symposium reflected an interest in guidance and the relevance of the emerging standards in the context of faith and human rights. As human rights are by definition a multi-stakeholder exercise, the Faith for Rights framework is a good example of States, State religious authorities, faith-based and civil society organizations, national human rights institutions and individuals working together in the collaborative networks called for in the action plan.

#### **IV. Observations and views on potential follow-up measures for further improvement of the implementation of the action plan**

81. Following on from resolution 16/18, the action plan adopted by the Human Rights Council in its resolution 37/38 and related General Assembly consensus resolutions provide a guiding tool for collective action to counter religious discrimination and intolerance. Greater efforts are required to foster its practical implementation. In the light of resolution 37/38, in which the Council asked for views on potential follow-up measures for further implementation of the action plan, the High Commissioner provides the suggestions below.

82. As stressed in several prior reports of the High Commissioner to the Human Rights Council and the reports of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly, there is a need to improve the reporting profile, in terms of the overall number of contributions received from States and of geographic participation (see, for example, A/HRC/34/35, para. 116). The High Commissioner also notes that the receipt of submissions from States has been decreasing.

83. As there are two separate annual reports on the same action plan, one to the Human Rights Council and one to the General Assembly, States should seriously consider streamlining these parallel reporting processes either in terms of content or focus, or by adjusting the reporting time frames to a biannual period in order to give a more meaningful update of how the action plan is being implemented worldwide.

84. As provided in resolution 37/38, there is an urgent need to implement all parts of the action plan outlined in paragraphs 7 and 8 with equal focus and attention in order to address the complex issues of religious intolerance. The submissions of some States for the present report continue to reflect an emphasis on some paragraphs or elements of the action plan, but little or none on the others.

85. It would be useful to strengthen communication with the public on the elements of the action plan and resources could be devoted to awareness-raising campaigns or communications initiatives, including those aimed at simplifying the language and disseminating a concise separate publication in all regions and in all United Nations languages, and at a later point in other local languages. Member States could also consider holding general public briefings on the Istanbul Process for Combating Intolerance, Discrimination and Incitement to Hatred and/or Violence on the Basis of Religion or Belief.

86. As specified in resolution 37/38, Member States are encouraged to consider providing updates on efforts made in this regard as part of their ongoing reporting to OHCHR. They are further encouraged to utilize the universal periodic review to fully address freedom of religion or belief and related issues. The use of that mechanism, including through information from national human rights institutions and civil society organizations, has great potential to improve the implementation of the action plan.

87. The submissions received from States continue to reflect the fact that government actions to combat intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against, persons based on religion and belief are still largely constitutional and legislative in focus and nature. The High Commissioner wishes to emphasize the responsibility of States to investigate and prosecute crimes and violations, hold perpetrators accountable and provide

remedies to victims. She wishes to stress once again the importance of taking practical measures to implement the extensive legislative frameworks to counter discrimination, intolerance and violence on the basis of religion or belief that are already available in many countries. As in the preamble of resolution 37/38, it should be recognized that working together to enhance the implementation of existing legal regimes that protect individuals against discrimination and hate crimes, increase interfaith and intercultural efforts and expand human rights education, is an important first step in combating incidents of intolerance, discrimination and violence against individuals on the basis of religion or belief. In line with the spirit and focus of the resolution and the specifics of the action plan, greater emphasis must also be placed on the numerous practical actions which need to be taken by Governments and other stakeholders.

88. It will also be important to expand participation in the implementation of the action plan. States may wish to consider inviting civil society and other stakeholders to also report on their actions in implementation of the plan. Similarly, multiple forms of discrimination may affect individuals and groups. It is very important to consider more closely how women are affected by such issues as religious profiling, representation and pluralism. Are they participating in the dialogues, collaborative networks and initiatives which States report are taking place? It would be helpful if future submissions made reference to these issues of multiple discrimination and the gender dimensions of discrimination on the basis of religion and belief.

89. Finally, with a view to enhancing the gathering of consolidated information and further reporting, States might revisit the proposal made at the Durban Review Conference that an observatory be created to gather and organize information about discrimination, including on the basis of religion or belief. Trends and manifestations could be compiled and analysed as well as legislation, policies, programmes and institutions which address them. It could be used to develop technical cooperation programmes and better assess the situation. The proposed observatory could initially build on the existing OHCHR database on combating racial discrimination, which was developed in accordance with the Durban Programme of Action.

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