



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

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Agenda item 9

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

### **Written statement\* submitted by the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV), a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[16 May 2010]

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\* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

## **Racism, racial discrimination, islamophobia**

Racism and racial discrimination are two of the most serious forms of violations of human rights in the world. And because of this it is necessary and important to devise mechanisms for the eradication of this vile phenomenon, mechanisms that are enforceable for all to implement. For this reason the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination was designed and ratified.

In its preamble the Human Rights Council Resolution 13/16 (A/HRC/RES/13/16) recalled: “the 2005 World Summit Outcome adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 60/1 of 16 September 2005, in which the Assembly emphasised the responsibilities of all States, in conformity with the Charter, to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction of any kind, and acknowledged the importance of respect and understanding for religious and cultural diversity throughout the world.” It also noted “with deep concern the instances of intolerance, discrimination and acts of violence against followers of certain faiths occurring in many parts of the world, including cases motivated by Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and Christianophobia [...]”.

Having stated the above, Muslims are specially targeted more than other groups. The prevention of the fast growth of conversion to Islam in the west, causing animosities among religions – Christianity towards Islam in particular – prevent of the migration of Muslims to western countries are all some of the objectives that the west’s media pursues through a media war against Islam.

While European countries have claims on freedom and democracy, they have set numerous obstacles in the way of the wearing of Hijab (veil) for Muslims in state schools, universities and many public places, the blatant example of which is the law banning the wearing of all forms of religious clothing or insignia from schools and universities in France (2004). The Hijab is something that is rarely seen even the most densely Muslim populated European regions, but these days it has become a the most important issue in government, parliament and EU Commission levels, such as Italy, the Netherlands, Denmark, Belgium and even Spain.

In Germany politicians are busy debating on taking similar action as France, and through a discriminatory approach they are using the threat to human rights as their excuse, and some legislators are even pushing for a ban on the display of religious symbols from schools, universities, and security places such as banks and airports.

These debates and arguments have reached a stage where some of these countries that claim to freedom of expression and belief and democracy want to instate prison sentence punishments for the violation of the ban on the full covering of the face (niqab, burka) by Muslim women. These measures widen education, job opportunities, and housing gaps for migrants and their children, Muslims in particular, particularly in Belgium.

In spite of the fact that we are in an era where the role of religions have further been noted than any other period in history, the spread of Islamophobia in some countries has took a notable rise, and despite the fact that these countries confirm the problem but they still do not want to accept the fact that measures such as the banning of the burka, not allowing Muslim students from attending schools and universities, media propaganda are some measures that cause the growth of Islamophobia. And if the roots and causes of these unnecessary phobias against Islam are not reviewed and without change in the political approach towards Muslims, their dress, places of worship will not be effective.

As a non-governmental organization that advocates peace and friendship, the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) believes:

1. The culture of religious conciliation and tolerance by the followers of different religions expand throughout the world and friendship and amicability run among people. International laws must be devised to prevent attacks against monotheist religions and religious figures.
  2. The full enjoyment of human rights is only possible in an environment that is full of peace, security, stability, justice and equality. Without these and without a just international order, no peace will be realised, and therefore lasting peace will only remain an inaccessible ideal. Through the holding of regional workshops, ambiguities that exist regarding religions can be identified and eliminated and become available information to all.
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