



**Statement, delivered on behalf of OIC by Ambassador Khalil Hashmi,
Permanent Representative to the UN, during General Debate under Agenda Item
No. 9 at the 48th session of Human Rights Council**

05 October 2021

Madam President,

Even after two decades since the adoption of the Durban Declaration, the world unfortunately has yet to overcome the ominous challenges of racism and hyper nationalism. Regrettably, racism and racial discrimination, in new forms and manifestations, on the basis of race, colour, sex, language and religion, remain pervasive today

The failure to combat these menaces of racial discrimination, xenophobia and religious intolerance not only threatens the social fabric of societies but also undermines aspirations for peaceful global coexistence.

The OIC states are concerned over systematic targeting of individuals and communities especially on the basis of their religion.

We strongly condemn and call for ending incitement to violence through denigration of revered religious personalities and symbols by way of caricature competitions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), destruction of mosques; and ban on construction of minarets. The OIC deplors defamation of any religion. Provocative statements by public leaders and government officials, which seek to stereotype Muslims and equate them with terrorism, are deeply troubling. Using Islamophobia as a tool to boost political or media ratings, as is evident in some so-called democracies, represents cumulatively a new form of institutionalized discrimination and deserves unqualified condemnation.

The OIC registers its deep concerns over the ban on facial veils in some European countries. The recent ruling by the European Court of Justice, allowing companies in the EU to legally bar female Muslim employees from wearing a headscarf, is tantamount to normalizing anti-Muslim hatred and Islamophobia. These steps are further marginalizing Muslim women and depriving them of their fundamental rights and basic freedoms.

The OIC rejects these actions as they clearly breach international human rights law and contradict the shared ideals of tolerance and pluralism.

The OIC also rejects any effort to legislate discriminatory and targeted measures against Muslim individuals and communities under the garb of countering terrorism in certain Western and other countries.

The OIC values the importance of the right to freedom of expression in line with articles 19 and 20 of ICCPR. However, we stress that this right cannot be invoked as a license to hate



speech, deliberate ridicule or willful insult other people's religion, religious personalities and sensibilities.

We reaffirm the importance of HRC Resolution 16/18 in combating religious intolerance including its call for preventive and affirmative measures to combat hate speech and xenophobic acts.

The OIC calls upon states to halt and reverse acts that contravene international human rights law and principles and hold those responsible for such actions – accountable.

I thank you.