



**Statement on behalf of OIC Group, delivered by Amb. Khalil Hashmi, Permanent Representative, during the Urgent Debate of the Human Rights Council to Discuss Premeditated Acts of Religious Hatred**

**53<sup>rd</sup> HRC Session**

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**Mr. President,**

The OIC thanks the Council for responding to its call and convening this urgent debate.

We reiterate our strong condemnation of premeditated, public and Islamophobic acts of desecrating the Holy Quran. No sacred book should ever be disrespected.

We have consistently cautioned this Council on the risks posed by such acts that are also a contemporary form of racism, and the need for meaningful prevention.

The international human rights law clearly calls for respect, protection and promotion of several indivisible rights. Concurrently, responsibilities and duties are germane to the exercise of these rights.

Despite normative stipulations, we have seen a clear pattern of deliberate desecration constituting incitement to hatred, as well as abdication of responsibility to prevent.

Let us be clear: commission of these willful and public desecration of a book sacred to billions of people is not an exercise of the right to free speech. They are an affront to our common humanity and human dignity.

We welcome the wide-ranging condemnation of these abhorrent acts from across the world.

**Mr. President,**

We are at an inflection point now. There is much at stake nationally, regionally and globally in this inter-connected and inter-dependent world. Silence, inaction or complacency is therefore no longer tenable.

We see the complementary value of affirmative measures such as promoting a culture of peace, mutual respect, understanding, tolerance, interfaith as well as inter-cultural harmony.

Yet, we must do more to effectively counter the growing scourge of religious hatred, its manifestations as well as its incitement.



The states as duty bearers are bound to protect rights and promote respect by enacting laws and policies to deter such acts of impunity.

For these reasons, the OIC has called for an urgent and serious conversation at this Council on prevention, deterrence, accountability and redressal measures.

We invite all States to join ranks and lend support to our draft resolution.

I thank you!