



National Statement delivered by Danyal Hasnain, Third Secretary,
During General Debate on Item 9
52nd Session
30 March 2023

Madam Vice President,

We align with the OIC statement and reaffirm the importance of combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in all its forms and manifestations.

We are gravely concerned over the steady rise in incidents of discrimination, hatred, hostility and violence on the basis of religion, especially against Muslim individuals and communities.

Anti-Muslim hatred and Islamophobia remains pervasive in many societies. Some of the visible manifestations are personal attacks, hateful rhetoric, racial profiling, stigmatization and stereotyping.

Muslim women, girls and youth are victims of systemic racism, undermining their rights and dignity. Unfortunately, these incidents are often sanctioned or tolerated by states under the guise of “free speech” or “national security”.

We strongly condemn the recent incidents of burning of Holy Quran in three countries. The recurrence of these events on 24 March is an awakening call that complicity and ignorance will breed hate and violence. We call on these states to take steps aimed at preventing hate crimes against Muslims and their faith and hold the perpetrators accountable.

Such provocative Islamophobic incidents serve no purpose other than hurting the sensitivities of over 1.5 billion Muslims and cannot be justified under the guise of free speech.

We reaffirm the right to freedom of expression and opinion in line with articles 19 and 20 of the ICCPR, while stipulating responsibilities and duties in exercising this right.

No individual should be allowed to incite violence and defame any religion including negative stereotyping, denigration of revered religious personalities, desecration of holy books and destruction of mosques.

We appreciate the commemoration of March 15 as International Day to Combat Islamophobia. We trust that this decision would provide impetus to our efforts in meaningfully combating discrimination on the basis of religion or belief.

We reiterate our call for enacting legal deterrence to combat anti-Muslim hatred and violence including through criminalizing these acts in line with action plan, as stipulated in the Human Rights Council resolution 16/18.

We call on the High Commissioner and Special Procedures to speak out against such troubling incidents and demand accountability for incitement to hatred and increasingly violent behaviors.

I thank you!