



**OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR  
HUMAN RIGHTS**



**Combating defamation of religions**

**Human Rights Resolution 2005/3**

*The Commission on Human Rights,*

*Recalling* that all States have pledged themselves, under the Charter of the United Nations, to promote and encourage universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion,

*Recalling also* its resolutions 1999/82 of 30 April 1999, 2000/84 of 26 April 2000, 2001/4 of 18 April 2001, 2002/9 of 15 April 2002, 2003/4 of 14 April 2003 and 2004/6 of 13 April 2004,

*Recalling further* the United Nations Millennium Declaration adopted by the General Assembly on 8 September 2000, welcoming the resolve expressed in the Declaration to take measures to eliminate the increasing acts of racism and xenophobia in many societies and to promote greater harmony and tolerance in all societies, and looking forward to its effective implementation at all levels, including in the context of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted in September 2001 by the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (A/CONF.189/12 and Corr.1),

*Welcoming* the proclamation by the General Assembly in its resolution 56/6 of 9 November 2001 of the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations and inviting States, the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, within existing resources, other international and regional organizations and civil societies to contribute to the implementation of the Programme of Action contained in that resolution,

*Welcoming also* the progress achieved in the follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action,

*Noting with regret* the cancellation of the meeting entitled “Civilization and harmony: values and mechanisms of the global order” which was to be held in Turkey in 2004 as a follow-up to the Organization of the Islamic Conference-European Union Forum held in Istanbul in February 2002, underscoring that such initiatives to deepen dialogue and reinforce understanding among the two biggest groups of nations of Eurasia and Africa will be continued,

*Reaffirming* that discrimination against human beings on the grounds of religion or

belief constitutes an affront to human dignity and a disavowal of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations,

*Convinced* that religious and cultural diversity in a globalizing world needs to be used as a vehicle for creativity, dynamism and promoting social justice, tolerance and understanding as well as international peace and security, and not as a rationale for a new ideological and political confrontation,

*Recognizing* the valuable contributions of all religions to modern civilization and the contribution that dialogue among civilizations can make to an improved awareness and understanding of the common values shared by all humankind,

*Reaffirming* that cultural diversity is a cherished asset for the advancement and welfare of humanity at large and should be valued, enjoyed, genuinely accepted and embraced as a permanent feature that enriches our societies,

*Emphasizing* that States, non-governmental organizations, religious bodies and the media have an important role to play in promoting tolerance and freedom of religion and belief through education that teaches tolerance and respect for religion and belief,

*Alarmed* at the continuing negative impact of the events of 11 September 2001 on Muslim minorities and communities in some non-Muslim countries and the negative projection of Islam in the media, and the introduction and enforcement of laws that specifically discriminate against and target Muslims,

*Alarmed also* at the serious instances of intolerance, discrimination and acts of violence based on religion or belief, intimidation and coercion motivated by extremism, religious or otherwise, occurring in many parts of the world and threatening the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

*Noting with concern* that defamation of religions is among the causes of social disharmony and leads to violations of human rights,

*Noting with deep concern* the increasing trend in recent years of statements attacking religions, Islam and Muslims in particular, especially in human rights forums,

1. *Expresses deep concern* at negative stereotyping of religions and manifestations of intolerance and discrimination in matters of religion or belief still in evidence in some regions of the world;

2. *Strongly deplores* physical attacks and assaults on businesses, cultural centres and places of worship of all religions as well as targeting of religious symbols;

3. *Notes with deep concern* the intensification of the campaign of defamation of religions, and the ethnic and religious profiling of Muslim minorities, in the aftermath of the

tragic events of 11 September 2001;

4. *Expresses deep concern* that Islam is frequently and wrongly associated with human rights violations and terrorism;

5. *Also expresses deep concern* at programmes and agendas pursued by extremist organizations and groups aimed at the defamation of religions, in particular when supported by Governments;

6. *Deplores* the use of the print, audio-visual and electronic media, including the Internet, and any other means to incite acts of violence, xenophobia or related intolerance and discrimination towards Islam or any other religion;

7. *Recognizes* that in the context of the fight against terrorism and the reaction to counter-terrorism measures, defamation of religions becomes an aggravating factor that contributes to the denial of fundamental rights and freedoms of target groups, as well as their economic and social exclusion;

8. *Stresses* the need to effectively combat defamation of all religions, Islam and Muslims in particular especially in human rights forums;

9. *Urges* States to take resolute action to prohibit the dissemination through political institutions and organizations of racist and xenophobic ideas and material aimed at any religion or its followers that constitute incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence;

10. *Also urges* States to provide, within their respective legal and constitutional systems, adequate protection against acts of hatred, discrimination, intimidation and coercion resulting from defamation of religions, to take all possible measures to promote tolerance and respect for all religions and their value systems, and to complement legal systems with intellectual and moral strategies to combat religious hatred and intolerance;

11. *Urges* all States to ensure that all public officials, including members of law enforcement bodies, the military, civil servants and educators, in the course of their official duties, respect different religions and beliefs and do not discriminate on the grounds of religion or belief, and that necessary and appropriate education or training is provided;

12. *Underscores* the need to combat defamation of religions by strategizing and harmonizing actions at local, national, regional and international levels through education and awareness-raising;

13. *Urges* States to ensure equal access to education for all, in law and in practice, including access to free primary education for all children, both girls and boys, and access for adults to lifelong learning and education based on respect for human rights, diversity and tolerance without discrimination of any kind, and to refrain from any legal or other measures

leading to impose racial segregation in access to schooling;

14. *Calls upon* the international community to initiate a global dialogue to promote a culture of tolerance and peace based on respect for human rights and religious diversity and urges States, non-governmental organizations, religious bodies and the print and electronic media to support and promote such a dialogue;

15. *Calls upon* the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to promote and include human rights aspects in the dialogue among civilizations, inter alia through:

(a) Integrating them into topical seminars and special debates on the positive contributions of cultures, as well as religious and cultural diversity, including through educational programmes, particularly the World Programme for Human Rights Education adopted on 10 December 2004;

(b) Collaboration by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights with other relevant international organizations in holding joint conferences designed to encourage this dialogue and promote understanding of the universality of human rights and their implementation at various levels;

16. *Requests* the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance to continue to examine the situation of Muslims and Arab peoples in various parts of the world, the discrimination faced by them with regard to access to justice, political participation, respect of cultures, physical assaults and attacks against their places of worship, cultural centres, businesses and properties in the aftermath of the events of 11 September 2001 and to report on his findings to the Commission at its sixty-second session, and to make recommendations to improve their situation;

17. *Requests* the High Commissioner to report to the Commission at its sixty-second session on the implementation of the present resolution;

18. *Decides* to consider this matter at its sixty-second session, under the same agenda item.

*44th meeting*

*12 April 2005*

[Adopted by a recorded vote of 31 to 16,  
with 5 abstentions. See chap. VI, E/CN.4/2005/L.10/Add.6]