

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
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Working Session 11

Hate speech:

Interestingly enough, there is no agreed upon definition of “hate speech”. And unfortunately, one man’s “hate speech” is another man’s “freedom of speech, freedom of expression”.

The definition of “hate speech” by incumbent government officials seems to be growing over time. It is used to suppress opposition opinions under the guise of “insult” or “right to reputation”, which is probably the most egregious innovation and expansion of the definition.

It’s easy to see how it can and is being abused. If a journalist, whistle blower or opposition member discovers or discloses malfeasance by a public official, disclosure brings a charge of violating to the “right of reputation”. Lost in the process is the veracity of the accusation as the accuser is arrested, harassed and bankrupted by legal proceedings.

Another aspect is the “incitement to violence” concept. It has been turned on its head. The normal definition would be if I were to urge my followers to commit violence against a particular group. But the way it’s being implemented in the OSCE by the Muslim groups is this: if we relate facts about Islamic doctrine or the life of their Prophet, they clearly threaten violence! But rather than protecting our rights to free speech, our telling the truth is considered “incitement to violence”.

This means that anyone’s right to free speech can be criminalized by threats. The ACT 5280 Coalition recommends that the OSCE