

**TEXT OF THE INTERVENTION BY THE AHMADIYYA MUSLIM COMMUNITY
INTERNATIONAL AT THE SEVENTH OSCE WORKING SESSION, 2013, WARSAW, IN
RELATION TO RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN KAZAKHSTAN AND THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC**

Respected Madam Moderator, Ambassador Bennett and distinguished guests, as we honour the twentieth anniversary of the High Commissioner for Minorities, this seventh OSCE Working Session on freedom of religion and belief could not be more pertinent. The Community that I represent is now banned from any practice of its peaceful faith in the Kyrgyz Republic and Kazakhstan due to onerous registration requirements that wrongfully deprive Ahmadi Muslims of the right to freely practice their faith.

I speak today as a representative of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is a peaceful Muslim Community with tens of millions of members in 204 countries.

British Prime Minister David Cameron recently said of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community:

“The tremendous charitable services that you have delivered to old and young alike are just a few of the many reasons that Britain can be proud of you. This is true faith in action. I know your community has suffered terrible persecution but I also know that your worldwide leader, His Holiness Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, is a man of peace. These are difficult times but the manner in which you persevere is exemplary. I hope that your good works, your message of peace and your philosophy of Love For All, Hatred For None continues to flourish in Britain and throughout the world.”

Prime Minister Cameron is joined in his admiration by world leaders across the globe.

His view reflects the approach of Ahmadis in the Kyrgyz Republic and Kazakhstan. In short we are a harmless and peaceful community.

In both countries hundreds of national Ahmadis have been registered for many years but over the past two years, the registrations of both communities have been cancelled. Even though this contravenes Human Dimension Commitments, Ahmadis have responded peacefully, respecting domestic law and not engaging in unlawful behaviour or any unruliness. They do so out of a love for their countries and a loyalty to their nations. It is therefore with great regret that we speak in this public forum about the discrimination Ahmadis face.

Both the Kazakhstan and Kyrgyz Republic Governments subject Ahmadi Muslims' religious beliefs to religious examinations, compelling Ahmadis to reveal their thoughts on their religion.

They seem to have two core issues:

1. That a few hundred Ahmadis might somehow destabilise the integrity of the majority Sunni Muslim religious belief held by approximately of 80% of the populations.
2. The State says we are not Muslims and so can't accept our registration. It bases that on foreign 1970s Fatwas which quite wrongly, decide that we are not Muslim.

Those result in decisions against Ahmadis that are imbalanced, disproportionate and unreflective of guidelines issued by Human Rights Treaty Bodies. In the case of Kazakhstan, they demand that Ahmadis remove the name of Muslims from its name to secure registration, thereby denying its identity.

For Ahmadis in Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic, their faith is now banned. No Mosque, No Prayer, No association, No Books, No social gatherings, No religious celebrations. If one were to take a Christian analogy, the effect of such bans is to cancel Christmas.

If at this point you were to ask:

- what business is it of the State to decide who is Muslim and who is not and then use arbitrary registration requirements to deny religious freedom?

Or:

- is it not misguided for a democratically elected secular European country that has ratified every major treaty on human rights to import the view of an unelected foreign body of unrepresentative religious clerics and make it a State policy that breaches all those commitments?

Your questions would be very well placed.

Time prevents me from speaking in detail on international law. But all in this room know well Articles 18 of the UDHR and ICCPR, Article 9 of the ECHR and Article 10 of the CIS Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. All point to the fact that using registration requirements to ban the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community's freedom to manifest its religion in these circumstances breaches international law.

Kokkanis vs Greece, Serif vs Greece, Metropolitan Church vs Moldova and other cases are a testament to freedom of religion and also challenge misuse of specific limitations of the freedom to manifest religion including by misuse of registration requirements.

Ladies and Gentlemen. Let me be clear. Where freedom of religion is usurped, the decline of other human rights soon follows. This forum must be one in which we challenge what is wrong in favour of what is right, where we protect the qualities of humankind with equality of humanity and where we speak up and speak loud for the rights of the persecuted.

Respected Madam Moderator, I invite our distinguished delegates to:

- **Recall** articles 18 of the ICCPR, UDHR, and other relevant human rights provisions;
- **Reaffirm** recognition by the 1993 Vienna World Conference on Human Rights that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated; and
- **Urge** the Kyrgyz Republic Government and the Kazakhstan Government to immediately take appropriate measures in compliance with their international obligations to register peaceful religious organisations such as the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.

I conclude by extending an offer to the Kyrgyz Republic Government and the Kazakhstan Governments to communicate with us today to resolve any concerns they may have and arrive at an amicable and speedy resolution. On behalf of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, I thank you for listening.

Khalil Yousuf, 26 September 2013. OSCE, ODHIR 2013 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, Warsaw.

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