



**Intervention at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)
Organization for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)
Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM) 2018**

Working Session 17: Combating Racism, Xenophobia, Intolerance & Discrimination

Clare M. Lopez, Vice President for Research and Analysis

Center for Security Policy, Washington, D.C.

Thursday 20 September 2018

Free Speech Under Fire, Part 3

This afternoon, I will address the issue of so-called “hate speech” in the context of Racism, Xenophobia, Intolerance and Discrimination.

What is hate? Hate is a human emotion, which by nature, arises spontaneously, unbidden, even perhaps unwanted. Thus, hate in and of itself as an emotion is largely involuntary.

Now, what one does with an emotion *is* voluntary. To express hate verbally is a decision that can be hurtful and offensive to the sensibilities of others—but not in any real or physical sense.

But the question before us is whether the mere “giving of offense” ought to be regulated or even criminalized in a free society. Is the expression of intolerance in the face of the intolerable – amputation, beheading, execution of apostates or gays, FGM, sex slavery – itself to be labeled “intolerance”? Is it not our duty to discriminate between genuine humanity and heinous acts of inhumanity?

As an American, a child of the Enlightenment and grateful beneficiary of the Judeo-Christian principles of individual liberty upon which Western Civilization and the American Republic are founded, I believe in the merits of free expression and speech – as the OSCE, ODIHR, and HDIM 2018 also – at least ostensibly – are, too.

We do not want and do not need a nanny state or Big Brother to protect us from mere words, most especially when they are truthful words. We are capable of responding to offensive words with effective arguments – not tyrannical regulation

– especially such regulation that is designed to protect any one belief system, such as Islam.

For when a free people allows government or any authority for that matter to suppress free speech on the pretext of shielding a protected class from hurtful words, those people acquiesce to the status of children – or worse yet, controlled, dominated subjects of a tyrannical power.

We Americans who have the tremendous good fortune to live with the protection of our 1st Amendment cherish especially the understanding that free speech defends all other freedoms – and that people without its protection – as all who live under the cruel oppression of Islamic Law (shariah) – are bereft of the ability to say what they think and thereby live as free individuals.

The Center for Security Policy therefore recommends that the OSCE ODIHR HDIM 2018 and all representatives here today resolve to oppose imposition of any sort of speech code or restriction – apart from immediate incitement to violence.

We urge all here present and the nations and groups they represent to pledge our commitment to oppose all efforts, all laws, all systems – especially shariah – that would abridge the natural right of free people to speak their beliefs, convictions, opinions without restriction.

Thank You.

##