



Organization of Islamic Cooperation's Statement on Freedom of Expression and Hate Speech

The concern and care for human rights and fundamental freedoms have been an integral part of the vision, the Charter and resolutions of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

While reaffirming its support for freedom of expression, the OIC distinguishes, in accordance with existing International human rights law, between the right to free expression and hate speech that promotes discrimination and intolerance on religious grounds. This is in this context, that the OIC is committed to fighting the rising trend of islamophobia, which constitutes a threat to the values of pluralism, global peace and harmony.

In its fight against discrimination on the basis of religion in general and against islamophobia in particular, the OIC has adopted a consensus-building approach at the International level with the adoption, in 2011, of the United Nations Human Rights Council Resolution 16/18 on "Combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence, and violence against persons based on religion or belief". Resolution 16/18, which was reaffirmed in subsequent years, calls upon all member states to foster religious freedom and pluralism, to ensure religious minorities are properly represented, and to consider adopting measures to criminalize incitement to imminent violence based on religion or belief. This Human Rights Council Resolution was subsequently adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (66/167) and paved the path for a consensual basis for effective cooperation. Both resolutions have been welcomed by respectable international human rights institutions and civil society.

The Istanbul Process, which aims at ensuring a transparent, sustained and structured process of engagement with a view to following up on the implementation of Resolution 16/18, provides a framework for a better understanding of stakeholder's different views, interests and concerns and accordingly shaping an appropriate plan of action based on positive and effective good practices shared in the meetings held under the said Process.

The fight against hate speech is the best way to serve freedom of expression, and the OIC reiterates its strong commitment to combating religious discrimination and intolerance.