



Alberto López Navarro
HazteOir.org
José Rodríguez Pinilla, 23
28016, Madrid, Spain
<http://www.hazteoir.org>

**HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING - Warsaw, 26th
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**Working session I: Fundamental Freedoms - Freedom of expression,
free media and information**

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALBERTO LÓPEZ-NAVARRO
MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF HAZTEOIR.ORG**

Media has a great responsibility in fostering tolerance in our societies. But regrettably, we have been witnessing lately a row of attacks against christian confessions from the side of large audience media groups, both publicly and privately owned.

These attacks can take the form of false accusations, mocking and despising in variety shows and advertisements, or just skewed news coverage that transmit a distorted image of Christians to the whole society.

While Christians don't need to be freed from criticism (just as any other person or institution under a democratic rule), there is a clear line between what is a legitimate critique and an offending act.

By no means are we advocating limiting freedom of expression or more regulation of media enterprises - we're simply advocating that the law applies the same way in case of offences against christian beliefs as when the offended is any other social group.

This issue should not be downplayed, as mainstream media groups play a deciding role in the way society perceives a given community. When this perception is manipulated in such a way that people begin to think that there is no problem in deriding or insulting a religious faith, the seeds for more open aggressions are being sown.

References:

<http://www.hazteoir.org/node/34197>

Recommendations:

- To use all available OSCE means to work against intolerance against Christians, inter alia by calling upon media groups to show respect for religious beliefs (Christians in particular, as they are the preferred target of offensive contents) and to take responsibility in maintaining an open, tolerant and free society.
- Hate Crimes begin with mocking: Raise awareness that the mocking of Christians and Christianity, the negative stereotyping by the media as well as the ridiculisation of Christians and Christian positions could possibly lead to hate crimes.