



## American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee

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### In Memoriam

Hala Salaam Maksoud, PhD  
(1943-2002)  
Alex Odeh  
(1944-1985)

5 October 2009

## OSCE Human Dimensions Implementation Meeting Warsaw, Poland

### Recommendations on Improving the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) work on Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims.

Since August of 2005 the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) has been invited nine times by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) to provide expert testimony in the field of anti-Muslim intolerance (a.k.a. Islamophobia). ADC now serves as a primary US-based subject-matter expert to the OSCE-ODIHR and its Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Department in providing best-practices on the relationship between security policies and the protection and promotion of human rights, including the prohibition on discrimination, the right to privacy, the freedom of religion or belief and the commonalities of humanitarian values shared by all.

Throughout these presentations, ADC serves to identify challenges to the participation of civil society and the implications of governmental counter-terrorism laws and policy on freedom of association and assembly and on civil society in general. Additionally, ADC highlights ways by which civil society, including the human rights community, can work practically in the prevention of terrorism and violent extremism. ADC's successful formula provides detailed analyses of the situation in the United States, aiming to provide an accurate portrayal of both the challenges that continue to hinder civil rights and liberties in addition to examples of best practices established through constructive coordination efforts between the Arab and Muslim American communities and some US government agencies. These include how the communities address challenges relating to intolerance and communication with government authorities in light of recent high-profile challenges, and especially in the post-9/11 environment. ADC presentations to the OSCE have been conducted in Brussels, Amsterdam, Vienna, Istanbul, Cordoba, Warsaw, Lisbon, Seville, and Barcelona. Based on this experience, ADC offers the following recommendations:

**1) Educational materials / guidelines on anti-Muslim intolerance:** There is a vital need to support the ODIHR's effort at drafting, publishing, and distributing educational materials and guidelines on anti-Muslim intolerance in schools and education systems. This effort is modeled after a similar successful effort initiated a few years ago addressing anti-Semitism. The OSCE Chairman-in-Office, working with the support of other OSCE delegations, can play an instrumental role in providing the ODIHR with the much-needed resources to



support this vital project. This is especially timely given the recent increase in high-profile hate-motivated crimes against Muslims in OSCE-member nations.

**2) Cooperation with other organizations in combating intolerance against Muslims:**

It would be very effective if the ODIHR is able to improve its cooperation with the UN Alliance of Civilizations and the Organization of Islamic Conference. This cooperation is on-going to some extent at the working level. However, raising the profile of this work would raise the significance of the OSCE's tolerance work on issues related to anti-Muslim intolerance. For example, the OSCE should invite representatives of these organizations as speakers for the next HDIM, SHDM and a potential high-level meeting specifically addressing anti-Muslim intolerance in 2010.

**3) Anti-Muslim hate-crimes / civil society capacity building:**

Hate crimes against Muslims in Europe are a growing concern for the OSCE. The ODIHR is in need of a specific campaign or initiative focusing on the capacity building of civil society and governmental authorities to more effectively respond to this growing phenomenon. Governments, especially West of Vienna, should be open to cooperation with the ODIHR to tackle this problem in Europe. There is an unfortunate perception that international cooperation on human rights, including hate crimes, is only for none-EU countries. As a first step, trainings to prevent and respond to hate crimes for civil society organizations in German, French, and English should be launched. This is a project that can be implemented within the next six months.

**4) Funding of NGOs participating in OSCE events:**

The practice of funding only NGOs from East of Vienna for their participation in OSCE events should be terminated. Over the past few years, this has disproportionately negatively affected the participation of NGOs addressing immigration issues and intolerance and discrimination against Muslims, as they do not have sufficient funding yet do not usually receive funding for participation in OSCE events.

**5) Country visit reports:**

The previous Chairman-in-Office's personal representative on anti-Muslim intolerance conducted visits to 13 countries (the Netherlands, the United States, France, the United Kingdom, Denmark, Germany, Spain, Norway, Slovenia, Finland, Switzerland, Sweden and Kazakhstan). Of these country visit reports only Finland, Spain and Denmark are publicly available. Although the reports on Slovenia, Sweden and Switzerland are available on their government's websites, they cannot be found on the public version of TANDIS (the OSCE's public database / website). In order to make those public on TANDIS, the ODIHR will require the approval of the Chairman-in-Office. The incoming Chairman-in-Office could at least approve these three country reports, as they are already available publicly. ADC also recommends that the United States and Kazakhstan, the incoming Chairman-in-Office, make public the reports on their own countries and demonstrate leadership in this regard. Of the remaining countries, only the Netherlands specifically did not agree to make the report available.