

OSCE Human Dimension Implementation meeting 2009

**Canadian Statement for the Working Session 10:
Tolerance and non-discrimination II
Review of the implementation of commitments, promotion of mutual respect and
understanding:**

Prevention and response to hate crimes in the OSCE area.

Monday, 5 October 2009

Thank you Madame Chairperson:

Participating States cannot afford to be complacent, and must act vigorously against the ugly phenomenon of hate crimes.

Hate crimes and discrimination are a significant source of violence in the OSCE region today. The OSCE's comprehensive approach to hate crimes - identifying set standards for the rights of persons belonging to minority groups and seeking early resolution to discrimination and potential hate crimes - is a major value added for our Organisation.

Very recently, two major institutional pillars of our Organisation, the ODIHR and the HCNM expressed concern over the continuing discriminatory treatment and exclusion of minorities and the recent escalation in hate-motivated incidents and racist rhetoric in our region. This is an alarming trend – it must be stopped.

Acknowledgement of the phenomenon is the first step in addressing it. In Canada, we acknowledge that although the proportion of hate crime is low compared to other crimes, it can have a lasting negative impact on the lives of its victims. We recognize that race and ethnicity have been a leading motivator of hate crime in our country. Disturbingly, statistics show that in Canada, young people have been more likely than others to be accused of hate crime, and to be involved as victims.

Canada's efforts against hate crime include a strong legislative framework, policing initiatives at all levels of government, and crime prevention activities. These are keystones in building a truly inclusive Canada.

However, an inclusive country is not enough. We strive, ultimately, for an inclusive world. The OSCE has proven, again and again, to be an important venue where participating States, together with civil society, review and assess progress in the implementation of agreed commitments. Canada commends, in particular, ODIHR's work in creating law-enforcement training for dealing with hate-motivated crimes, as well as drafting legislative guidelines on hate crimes.

To build on these initiatives, we encourage ODIHR to continue working with member States on the collection of accurate data on hate crime and developing legislation to combat impunity for this type of violence.

When hate crimes are rooted in discrimination, we must make a concerted effort to increase education to promote greater tolerance and appreciation of the different communities that make up our societies in order to prevent acts of violence manifesting hate.

As we all know, there is a proliferation of expressions of hate on the Internet. Canada urges member states to ensure that hate speech on the Internet is investigated, in order to identify individuals committing hate crimes, and to bring to justice those who incite or promote hatred against identifiable groups

We all have an important role to play in speaking out against violent hate incidents and intolerance in the OSCE region. It is our collective responsibility, and Canada looks forward to our collective work to this end.

Merci Madame la Présidente