



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE HOLY SEE  
TO THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY  
AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

**Statement of Monsignor Michael W. Banach,  
Permanent Representative of the Holy See,  
at the 857<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session of the OSCE Permanent Council  
7 April 2011**

**RE.: Recent Burning of the Quran**

Mister Chairman,

My Delegation has listened closely to the statement read by Kazakhstan on behalf of several OSCE participating States concerning the recent trial and burning of the Quran which resulted also in demonstrations, attacks and deaths at the United Nations complex in Afghanistan, as well as in the killing of Christians, attacks on churches and the burning of Bible in Pakistan.

In this regard, I would like to recall the statement made by the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue last September and concerning the proposed "Koran Burning Day" on the occasion of the Anniversary of the September 11<sup>th</sup> tragic terrorist attacks in 2001. Its content remains valid also for this occasion.

"The Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue received with great concern the news of the proposed "Koran Burning Day" on the occasion of the Anniversary of the September 11<sup>th</sup> tragic terrorist attacks in 2001 which resulted in the loss of many innocent lives and considerable material damage.

These deplorable acts of violence, in fact, cannot be counteracted by an outrageous and grave gesture against a book considered sacred by a religious community. Each religion, with its respective sacred books, places of worship and

symbols, has the right to respect and protection. We are speaking about the respect to be accorded the dignity of the person who is an adherent of that religion and his/her free choice in religious matters....

Each religious leader and believer is also called to renew the firm condemnation of all forms of violence, in particular those committed in the name of religion. Pope John Paul II affirmed: "Recourse to violence in the name of religious belief is a perversion of the very teachings of the major religions" (*Address to the new Ambassador of Pakistan, 16 December 1999*). His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI, similarly expressed, "...violence as a response to offences can never be justified, for this type of response is incompatible with the sacred principles of religion..." (*Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI, to the new Ambassador of Morocco, 6 February 2006*)."

Thank you, Mister Chairman.