



**Statement by**  
**H.E. Iyad Ameen Madani,**  
**Secretary General of Organization of Islamic Cooperation**  
**at the**  
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**Mr. President, Madam High Commissioner,**

**Excellencies, Head of Delegations,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Allow me, at the outset, to join all those who took the floor before me to congratulate you Mr. President, on your presidency for the year 2014. You have the full support of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in the discharge of your onerous responsibilities. OIC also appreciates the laudable role played by the High Commissioner Pillay. We will continue to support her and her Office (OHCHR) in performance of their mandated responsibilities.

As the new Secretary General of the OIC, it is my privilege to address this august gathering of the Human Rights Council. OIC attaches great importance to this Council and has been actively involved in its activities since its institution-building phase.

**Mr. President,**

As we meet here today in Geneva at the UN Human Rights Council, there are thousands of human beings, just like us, who are deprived from the most basic of human rights, the right to life. Innocent civilians have been subjected to egregious human rights violations including the denial of their fundamental right to life in *Syria, Central African Republic and Myanmar*. As the human rights conscience of the international community, this Council has the responsibility to ensure promotion and protection of human rights as well as full implementation of international human rights law in these situations.

The OIC has repeatedly called for immediate cessation of hostilities and violence in **Syria** as well as the need to respect human rights of and ensure provision of humanitarian assistance to the affected population.

The OIC calls upon the authorities in **CAR** to ensure protection of the life and livelihood of all its citizens in particular its Muslim community which has been subjected to ethnic cleansing and urges the international community to take urgent and comprehensive actions enabling the country and the region as a whole to return to peace, security and stability. The OIC also calls upon the Government of Myanmar to ensure the protection of the right to life and wellbeing of its Rohingya population as well as take steps to review its legislation to avoid discriminatory effects of denying citizenship to Rohingya Muslims.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The right to self-determination is a fundamental right and preemptory norm of international law. Its denial leads to violation of all other rights. Longstanding cases of denial of this right continue to stain the collective conscience of the international community.

In the case of *Palestine*, despite repeated resolutions by this Council, there is no progress on the ground. During the recent Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Israel, the occupying power, the overwhelming majority of the international community once again demanded to immediately put an end to its brutal treatment and violation of human rights of the Palestinian people. The systematic pattern of expansion of illegal settlements; judaization of East Jerusalem, confiscation of Identity documents of Palestinians; enactment of the recent racist law passed by Israeli Knesset that imposes Israeli sovereignty over the holy mosque of Al-Aqsa, apartheid wall; blockade of the Gaza Strip; treatment of Palestinian prisoners; Palestinian refugees and violations of the whole range of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of Palestinian people must be addressed with utmost urgency by this Council.

Israel does not seem to have enough to satisfy its thirst for the oppression of Palestinians. It has stolen their land, their places of worship, their olive trees, but that is not enough. Israel has now embarked upon a systematic process of claiming to itself Palestinian food, music, folklore, costumes etc. Israel simply wants to erase and eradicate any notion of a Palestinian identity. When it comes to the question of Palestine, Israel has an unmatched disdain for human rights, international law and basic human decency.

The OIC has repeatedly called for a peaceful settlement of the *Kashmir dispute* and believes that a just and durable solution, in accordance with the wishes of the Kashmiri people, must be sought through sustained and meaningful dialogue between all the concerned Parties.

The OIC condemns the actions perpetrated against civilian Azerbaijani population by Armenia in the occupied Azerbaijani territory of Nagorno-Karabakh and call for the resolution of the conflict in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions within the sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of the internationally recognized borders of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

**Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The freedom from fear is another fundamental right of all humans, but Islamophobia continues to form a vital concern for all the Muslims. I reiterate the OIC's repeated warning that if not addressed squarely, it will have serious repercussions for the unity, stability and coherence of affected societies. We must not be held hostage to such acts of defamation and incitement to hatred on religious grounds. International human rights law provides important and unambiguous safeguards for prohibiting any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, to ensure the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by all.

The consensual passage of *HRC resolution 16/18* has been widely acknowledged as a positive development in addressing this concern. However, it was the first step in the process and not an end in itself. **The Action Plan presented in this resolution must be**

**implemented in full, not selectively.** The OIC did not stop at mere passage of this resolution and together with its partners like the United States, EU and others embarked upon the *Istanbul process*, which carries tremendous potential for evolving a common understanding to deal with the subject of incitement to hatred and violence while addressing genuine concerns of all parties. The time has come to seriously discuss and find solutions to important issues such as ascertaining the threshold between incitement to hatred and violence and freedom of expression that has to be dealt under Art 19 and 20 of International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

**Mr. President,**

OIC sincerely believes in furthering the cause of promoting and protecting universal human rights. However, some of the notions, which are neither universal nor belong to **universally accepted** human rights values are now being pushed to promote specific interests. The OIC is all out for effectively pursuing and promoting the well-articulated ideals of family as stipulated in Art 16 of UDHR and Art 23 of ICCPR. As stipulated in these articles, family, consisting of man and woman, is the fundamental unit of society and is entitled to protection by the society and the State. Any other meaning is selective and does not hold a universal agreement. There should be no arbitrary imposition of one set of values over others in particular through coercive measures, which in no way serves the purpose or ideals of human rights. Indeed they do the contrary and create more rifts and divisions.

It is our sincere hope that this Council will continue to pursue the human rights agenda on the basis of universally agreed human rights. Also as agreed in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (VDPA), while considering the issues of human rights, historical, cultural, and religious diversity and backgrounds must be borne in mind. No society, no country, no region should hide behind its culture to justify human rights abuses, but the diversity, the historical context, the religious beliefs can not and should not be bulldozed, ignored or disregarded, if we were to achieve a truly universal human rights.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The concern and care for human rights have been an integral part of the vision, Charter and resolutions of the OIC. In the Charter of the O.I.C. as amended, the Member States express their determination to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms; to safeguard and promote the rights of women and their participation in all spheres of life; to assist Muslim minorities and communities outside the Member States to preserve their dignity, cultural and religious identity. In its ten-year strategic action plan, the OIC asserted that it has become imperative on the Member States to take joint action to revive the Islamic Ummah's fine example of tolerance and enlightened moderation and to condemn extremism in all its forms and manifestations as it contradict Islamic values. The 10-year plan also requires Member States to seriously endeavor to enlarge the scope of political participation, ensure

equality, civil liberties and social justice as well as to promote transparency and accountability, and eliminate corruption in the OIC Member States.

The OIC also adopted a number of human rights documents that interalia include the Covenant on the Rights of the Child in Islam and the OIC Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women. In 2011, the OIC adopted the Statue of the OIC Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission, which stipulates that the Commission shall support Member States' efforts to consolidate civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

This Council has great potential to further the cause of human rights and indeed it has proved so through its vigorous and noteworthy work. The mechanism through which it has contributed the most is the Universal Periodic Review, which has proven the adage that promotion and protection of human rights are best served through a universal, cooperative and constructive approach. Only through an apolitical lens can we serve the cause of human rights in an objective manner.

In conclusion, Mr. President, I wish you and the HRC success in its deliberations and meaningful outcomes on all issues under consideration. The OIC will continue to constructively engage and cooperate in realizing the rightful mandate of this august body.

**I thank you all.**

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