

Statement by Ambassador TAIB SAAD EDDINE
On
Behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference
Before
The 10th Session of the UN Human Rights Council
(4th of March 2009 – Geneva)

Mr. President

It gives me great pleasure to address this august assembly on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Conference. Human rights issues are primary concern to the OIC which dedicates great importance to them and works hard to uphold and disseminate these rights among member states.

I would like, at the outset to thank the High Commissioner, her Staff, the Special Rapporteurs and independent experts for their praise-worthy work.

Mr. President

The OIC member states consider the Universal Declaration and the two international covenants as a metaphor of human connectivity, and as an imperative living documents which are useful mechanism for tackling present day human rights challenges. In line with the decision adopted by the OIC's third extraordinary summit in late 2005, the OIC is currently in the process of establishing a permanent and independent commission on human rights for the OIC member states.

As the UN Human Rights Council, is heading towards its third year, it would be a timely endeavour to reconsider its short falls and its

contributions, which we expect them to be based on the principles of Universality, impartiality, objectivity, non selectivity, and on constructive international dialogue and cooperation. The OIC is also in favour of addressing egregious violations of Human Rights whenever they may occur. We emphatically also agree that selective or self-serving interpretations will complicate our work and keep the Council politicized. That is why OIC has always been in favour of a Council which is “constructive and remedial” and not driven by judgemental and selective approach.

Mr. President

The OIC is increasingly worried about the mounting phenomenon of Islamophobia which is considered by some Western reports as worse than racial abuse, and which has resulted in multitude of prejudices and discrimination against all Muslim, and profoundly eroded their fundamental human rights. Human Rights Council’s role in the fight against this phenomenon must be highlighted. We also believe that the Council cannot ignore the alarming signs of regression in efforts to combat racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia, particularly the upsurge in racist violence.

The OIC welcomes with satisfaction the ongoing discussion on Durban PrepCom and working group of follow up to Durban. We believe that the upcoming Durban review conference should provide the international community an opportunity to discuss the contemporary scourge of racism and to suggest practical and efficient solutions to deal with them.

The OIC would like to reiterate once again that the Durban Review process should not be politically motivated process; neither should it

be an anti-Semitic exercise. Anti-Semitism is a practice that neither originates within, nor does it belong to Islamic culture. Anti-Semitism could not be associated with Islam or Muslims because believing in the message of Moses as a revealed religion is a fundamental part of Islamic faith. The review should be on the contrary an inclusive process, where all stake-holders are free to address the real and serious challenges of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia.

Mr. President

The OIC would, however, like to express its deep concerns regarding Israeli practices and policies in the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories which are in total contravention of the universal human rights principles and the 4th Geneva Convention. It is imperative to raise the lack of determination in the Council to tackle this matter more vigorously. The latest brutal massacre of several hundreds of children and women in "Gaza" few weeks ago, stands as a glaring example of these Israeli practices. The OIC condemns all these inhuman practices of collective punishment, indiscriminate killing of children, women and civilians, extrajudicial killing of leaders of civil society, wanton destruction of infrastructure, homes and government buildings, daily usurpation of lands and building of illegal settlements on occupied lands.

The Council owes it to those thousands of Palestinians children, women and innocent civilians brutally killed or maimed by the Israel war machine to take the needed measures for dealing with the systematic violations of human rights in Palestine and devise new

ways to prevent Israel from further perpetrating such repeated war crimes.

In conclusion, the OIC reiterates its support to the work of the Council, and will continue to do so with a view to allow it to carry on its mandate.