

Islamic Republic of

I R A N

Permanent Mission to the United Nations

Statement by:

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs

On

Agenda item 69:

"Elimination of Racism and Racial Discrimination"

**Third Committee of the 60th Session of the
United Nations General Assembly**

New York, November 8, 2005

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Our fight against racism and racial discrimination entered into its new phase with the establishment of the United Nations. From the beginning "equality and non-discrimination" has been one of our fundamental principles which despite serious efforts of the world community, has not been attained. Unfortunately racism, ranging from social exclusion to ethnic cleansing, is still the source of atrocities and conflicts. Regretfully millions of people are daily targets of discriminatory treatment, as countless human beings continue to be victims of xenophobia and related intolerance.

Modern-day racism is no longer merely based on a supposed inequality between races. Increasingly it is based on culture, nationality or religion. This new form of racism which is disseminated in large proportion in the media including internet and encouraged by some policies, targets vulnerable social groups such as aboriginal, new immigrants, non-nationals, ethnic and religious minorities, just because of their differences.

Since the events of 11th September, a new wave of discrimination, civil rights abuses, and hate crimes against Muslims spread in many western societies. After July 7, 2005, this ugly trend has been intensified at its highest degree and even in some cases led to loss of life.

The special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance states in his report (Document No E/cn.4/2005/18/Add.4) “The increase in individual acts of discrimination against Moslem populations, their places of worship and culture, including physical and verbal assault; profaning of cemeteries; attacks on imams and burning the mosques; more difficulties and more resistance in some countries in particular European countries in connection with the building of mosques and places of worship; the expulsions of imams from some European countries...” .

Regretfully the new wave of discrimination that has been occurred under the shadow of combating terrorism, have following alarming characteristics: legalization of restricting the rights and freedoms of individuals from performing their religious duties which not only create an obstacle to their full participation in public life but also generate, extend or legitimize new forms of discrimination; making a linkage between the rise of some phobias such as anti-Semitism and presence of a significant Muslim population in the given territories by certain politicians and media; insulting the holy Koran and Islamic values in order to humiliate and put psychological pressure on Muslim prisoners; the intellectual legitimization of hostility towards Islam and its followers and the political tolerance of such hostility in some countries;.....

Undoubtedly all these adversary aspects can be addressed by states. While their eradication is a necessary step in combating discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, it requires firm conviction and serious determination of all concerned countries and monitoring of other members of international community and civil society.

Mr. Chairman,

It is our common duty to look back to learn from history so that we never forget bitter experiences of mankind during the second world war, ethnic cleansing in eastern Europe and Rwanda and similar tragic events resulted from racism and racial discrimination.

Today, evil manifestations of xenophobia and intolerance not only remain stumbling blocks to full realization of human rights but also represent a serious danger to international peace and security. In other words as the Special Rapporteur stipulated in the aforementioned report, xenophobic manifestations such as Islamophobia bear with it a dynamic of a clash of cultures, civilizations and religions”

In this regard the Islamic republic of Iran as one of the pioneering states in combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance would like to draw your attention to some key steps which in view of my delegation are considerably important:

1. Establishment of trust among people of different religions, cultures and civilizations as the highest priority of all member states and regional and international organizations.

2. Negating militarism and unilateralism as a source of generating hatred must change its place with non-violence and multilateralism.
3. Ensuring that any measures taken in the fight against terrorism do not discriminate, in purpose or effect, against neither Moslems nor Christians nor Jews and followers of other religions and that they are not subjected to racial or ethnic profiling or stereotyping.
4. Taking resolute action to counter any tendency to target, stigmatize, stereotype or profile on the basis of race, color, descent, and national or ethnic origin , member of "non-citizen" population groups, specially by politicians, officials, educators and the media, on the internet and other electronic communications networks and in society at large.
5. The media and internet should be prevented from being used to spread hatred while safeguarding freedom of opinion and expression.
6. Public authorities should not only condemn xenophobic manifestations but ensure that law enforcement and other practices be followed through pledges of non-discrimination.
7. Taking action against acts of violence based on religious conviction, culture, race and ethnicity and ensuring the access of victims to effective legal remedies and the right to seek just and adequate reparation for any damage suffered as a result of such acts.
8. Calling upon political leaders to continue international efforts to eradicate racism in general and different phobias in particular and to contribute to building an inclusive society that is truly reflective of the ethnic, religious and cultural diversity of its people.

Mr. Chairman,

Islamic Republic of Iran believes that racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance should receive due attention in our collective efforts. Undoubtedly achievement of the purpose of non-discrimination and equality requires the serious involvement of all member states, governmental and non-governmental, regional and international organizations. My country as it did in the past is ready to cooperate closely with international community to eradicate these inhuman phenomena.

Regardless of our other efforts in combating racism, in cooperation with international community and for the purpose of strengthening existing UN mechanisms, the Islamic Republic of Iran ratified the amendments to article 8, paragraph 6 of the International Convention On Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

Thank you ,Mr. Chairman.