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## Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 18 December 2014

[on the report of the Third Committee (A/69/488/Add.2 and Corr.1)]

### **69/174. Combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief**

*The General Assembly,*

*Reaffirming* the commitment made by all States under the Charter of the United Nations to promote and encourage universal respect for and observance of all human rights and fundamental freedoms without distinction as to, inter alia, religion or belief,

*Reaffirming also* the obligation of States to prohibit discrimination and violence on the basis of religion or belief and to implement measures to guarantee the equal and effective protection of the law,

*Reaffirming further* that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated,

*Reaffirming* that the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights<sup>1</sup> provides, inter alia, that everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief, which shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of one's choice and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest one's religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching,

*Reaffirming also* the positive role that the exercise of the right to freedom of opinion and expression and full respect for the freedom to seek, receive and impart information can play in strengthening democracy and combating religious intolerance, and reaffirming further that the exercise of the right to freedom of expression carries with it special duties and responsibilities, in accordance with article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,

*Expressing deep concern* at those acts that advocate religious hatred and thereby undermine the spirit of tolerance,

*Reaffirming* that terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group,

<sup>1</sup> See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.



*Condemning* the criminal acts committed by terrorist and extremist groups and movements against persons based on their religion or belief, and deeply regretting attempts to link these acts to any one specific religion or belief,

*Reaffirming* that violence can never be an acceptable response to acts of intolerance on the basis of religion or belief,

*Welcoming* Human Rights Council resolutions 16/18 of 24 March 2011,<sup>2</sup> 19/25 of 23 March 2012<sup>3</sup> and 22/31 of 22 March 2013<sup>4</sup> and General Assembly resolutions 67/178 of 20 December 2012 and 68/169 of 18 December 2013,

*Deeply concerned* about incidents of intolerance, discrimination and violence against persons based on their religion or belief in all regions of the world,

*Deploring* any advocacy of discrimination or violence on the basis of religion or belief,

*Strongly deploring* all acts of violence against persons on the basis of their religion or belief, as well as any such acts directed against their homes, businesses, properties, schools, cultural centres or places of worship,

*Strongly deploring also* all attacks on and in religious places, sites and shrines in violation of international law, in particular human rights law and international humanitarian law, including any deliberate destruction of relics and monuments,

*Deeply concerned* about the prevalence of impunity in some instances, and the lack of accountability in some cases, in addressing violence against persons on the basis of religion or belief in public and private spheres, and stressing the importance of making necessary efforts to raise awareness to address the spread of hate speech against persons on the basis of religion or belief,

*Concerned* about actions that wilfully exploit tensions or target individuals on the basis of their religion or belief,

*Expressing deep concern* at the instances of intolerance, discrimination and acts of violence occurring in the world, including cases motivated by discrimination against persons belonging to religious minorities, in addition to the negative projection of the followers of religions and the enforcement of measures that specifically discriminate against persons on the basis of religion or belief,

*Expressing concern* at the growing manifestations of intolerance based on religion or belief, which can generate hatred and violence among individuals from and within different nations and which may have serious implications at the national, regional and international levels, and in this regard emphasizing the importance of respect for religious and cultural diversity, as well as interreligious, interfaith and intercultural dialogue aimed at promoting a culture of tolerance and respect among individuals, societies and nations,

*Recognizing* the valuable contribution of people of all religions or beliefs to humanity and the contribution that dialogue among religious groups can make towards an improved awareness and understanding of the common values shared by all humankind,

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<sup>2</sup> See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 53 (A/66/53)*, chap. II, sect. A.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, *Sixty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 53* and corrigendum (A/67/53 and Corr.1), chap. III, sect. A.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, *Sixty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 53 (A/68/53)*, chap. IV, sect. A.

*Underlining* the fact that States, regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, religious bodies and the media have an important role to play in promoting tolerance and respect for religious and cultural diversity and in the universal promotion and protection of human rights, including freedom of religion or belief,

*Underlining also* the importance of raising awareness about different cultures and religions or beliefs and of education in the promotion of tolerance, which involves the acceptance by the public of and its respect for religious and cultural diversity, including with regard to religious expression, and underlining further the fact that education, in particular at school, should contribute in a meaningful way to promoting tolerance and the elimination of discrimination based on religion or belief,

*Recognizing* that working together to enhance the implementation of existing legal regimes that protect individuals against discrimination and hate crimes, increase interreligious, interfaith and intercultural efforts and expand human rights education is an important first step in combating incidents of intolerance, discrimination and violence against individuals on the basis of religion or belief,

*Recalling* General Assembly resolution 68/127, entitled “A world against violence and violent extremism”, adopted by consensus on 18 December 2013, welcoming the leading role of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in promoting intercultural dialogue, the work of the Alliance of Civilizations, the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for Dialogue between Cultures and the work of the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue in Vienna, and recalling also Assembly resolution 65/5 of 20 October 2010 on World Interfaith Harmony Week, proposed by King Abdullah II of Jordan,

*Welcoming*, in this regard, all international, regional and national initiatives aimed at promoting interreligious, intercultural and interfaith harmony and combating discrimination against individuals on the basis of religion or belief, including the launching of the Istanbul Process for Combating Intolerance, Discrimination and Incitement to Hatred and/or Violence on the Basis of Religion or Belief, and taking note of the initiative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence,

*Welcoming also* the continuation of the organization of workshops and meetings in the framework of the Istanbul Process and the promotion of effective implementation of Human Rights Council resolution 16/18 to counter global violence, religious discrimination and intolerance,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General;<sup>5</sup>
2. *Expresses deep concern* at the continued serious instances of derogatory stereotyping, negative profiling and stigmatization of persons based on their religion or belief, as well as programmes and agendas pursued by extremist individuals, organizations and groups aimed at creating and perpetuating negative stereotypes about religious groups, in particular when condoned by Governments;
3. *Expresses concern* that the number of incidents of religious intolerance, discrimination and related violence, as well as of negative stereotyping of

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<sup>5</sup> A/69/336.

individuals on the basis of religion or belief, continues to rise around the world, which may have serious implications at the national, regional and international levels, condemns, in this context, any advocacy of religious hatred against individuals that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, and urges States to take effective measures, as set forth in the present resolution and consistent with their obligations under international human rights law, to address and combat such incidents;

4. *Condemns* any advocacy of religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, whether it involves the use of print, audiovisual or electronic media or any other means;

5. *Recognizes* that the open public debate of ideas, as well as interreligious, interfaith and intercultural dialogue, at the local, national and international levels, can be among the best protections against religious intolerance and can play a positive role in strengthening democracy and combating religious hatred, and expresses its conviction that a continuing dialogue on these issues can help to overcome existing misperceptions;

6. *Also recognizes* the strong need for global awareness about the possible serious implications of incitement to discrimination and violence, which may have serious implications at the national, regional and international levels, and urges all Member States to make renewed efforts to develop educational systems that promote all human rights and fundamental freedoms that enhance tolerance for religious and cultural diversity, which is fundamental to promoting tolerant, peaceful and harmonious multicultural societies;

7. *Calls upon* all States to take the following actions, as called for by the Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, to foster a domestic environment of religious tolerance, peace and respect by:

(a) Encouraging the creation of collaborative networks to build mutual understanding, promoting dialogue and inspiring constructive action towards shared policy goals and the pursuit of tangible outcomes, such as servicing projects in the fields of education, health, conflict prevention, employment, integration and media education;

(b) Creating an appropriate mechanism within Governments to, inter alia, identify and address potential areas of tension between members of different religious communities and assisting with conflict prevention and mediation;

(c) Encouraging the training of government officials in effective outreach strategies;

(d) Encouraging the efforts of leaders to discuss within their communities the causes of discrimination and developing strategies to counter those causes;

(e) Speaking out against intolerance, including advocacy of religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence;

(f) Adopting measures to criminalize incitement to imminent violence based on religion or belief;

(g) Understanding the need to combat denigration and the negative religious stereotyping of persons, as well as incitement to religious hatred, by strategizing and harmonizing actions at the local, national, regional and international levels through, inter alia, education and awareness-raising;

(h) Recognizing that the open, constructive and respectful debate of ideas, as well as interreligious, interfaith and intercultural dialogue, at the local, national,

regional and international levels, can play a positive role in combating religious hatred, incitement and violence;

8. *Also calls upon* all States:

(a) To take effective measures to ensure that public functionaries, in the conduct of their public duties, do not discriminate against an individual on the basis of religion or belief;

(b) To foster religious freedom and pluralism by promoting the ability of members of all religious communities to manifest their religion and to contribute openly and on an equal footing to society;

(c) To encourage the representation and meaningful participation of individuals, irrespective of their religion or belief, in all sectors of society;

(d) To make a strong effort to counter religious profiling, which is understood to be the invidious use of religion as a criterion in conducting questioning, searches and other investigative law enforcement procedures;

9. *Further calls upon* all States to adopt measures and policies to promote full respect for and protection of places of worship and religious sites, cemeteries and shrines and to take protective measures in cases where they are vulnerable to vandalism or destruction;

10. *Calls for* strengthened international efforts to foster a global dialogue for the promotion of a culture of tolerance and peace at all levels, based on respect for human rights and diversity of religions and beliefs;

11. *Encourages* all States to consider providing updates on efforts made in this regard as part of ongoing reporting to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and in this respect requests the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to include those updates in her reports to the Human Rights Council;

12. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventieth session a report that includes information provided by the High Commissioner on steps taken by States to combat intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief, as set forth in the present resolution.

*73rd plenary meeting  
18 December 2014*