



PAKISTAN

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Statement

By

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**On Behalf of the
Organization of the Islamic Conference**

**on the
Report of the UN High Commissioner
for Human Rights**

**at the
Fourth Session of the Human Rights Council**

**Geneva
14 March 2007**

Mr. President,

I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the Member States of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

We thank the High Commissioner for Human Rights for her report as well as for her statement this afternoon regarding the implementation of priority areas by her Office. We also thank her for the continued support given by her Office to the work of the Human Rights Council in its transitional but crucial phase.

The OIC had hoped that the report would make specific references to the status of implementation of various resolutions/ decisions of the Human Rights Council relating to the situation of human rights in Palestine and other Occupied Arab Territories. The report has indicated that the issue of accountability for gross violations of human rights and humanitarian law remains high on the agenda of the Office of the High Commissioner. The Office, therefore, should inform the Human Rights Council about efforts and recommendations to prevent systematic and continued Israeli violations of human rights in Palestine and in other Occupied Arab Territories.

Mr. President,

The report has a chapter on strengthening thematic expertise vis-à-vis various dimensions of human rights. This includes efforts to facilitate discussion on complementary standards to fill the existing gaps in international instruments to promote equality and non-discrimination. The report, however, makes no reference to contributions by the Office of the High Commissioner to combat the growing trend of Islamophobia.

The Special Rapporteur on Contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, in his last year's report entitled "Situation of Muslims and Arab peoples in various parts of the world" had concluded that there was a serious upsurge in Islamophobic incidents manifested mainly in hostility towards Islam and its believers.

The Secretary General of the OIC, in his address to the High level Segment of the Council on 12 March, 2007, had also pointed out that the Human Rights Council should not stay idle and overlook the threat of defamation of religions.

The OIC endorses the proposal of its Secretary General that there is a dire need to fill the judicial vacuum of deficiency in dealing with the question of

respect for religions in the United Nations. This deficiency should be addressed by taking effective and legally binding measures for combating defamation of all religions and incitement to racial and religious violence. In this respect the OIC hopes that the panel of highly qualified experts, constituted in follow up to the Council's resolution 1/5 of 30 June 2006, will elaborate concrete recommendations on the means to bridge the gaps on combating defamation of religions and incitement to racial and religious violence including through drafting a new optional protocol to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

The OIC also wishes to reiterate that capital punishment remains an issue within the domain of the criminal justice system. The decision whether or not to impose the death penalty on those convicted of the most serious crimes, after exhausting all legal remedies and applying due process of law, remains within the sovereign jurisdiction of the States.

Finally, the Universal Periodic Review mechanism is still being discussed. A great amount of progress has already been made. We look forward to bringing this issue to closure by 18 June 2007.

Thank you, Mr. President.