



PAKISTAN

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

8 EAST 65th STREET - NEW YORK, NY 10021 - (212) 879-8600

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STATEMENT

BY

SENATOR (R) MR. AKRAM ZAKI

MEMBER PAKISTAN DELEGATION TO THE 61ST SESSION OF
THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ON AGENDA ITEM 65:

“ELIMINATION OF RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION”

AT THE THIRD COMMITTEE

OF THE

61ST SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK
6 NOVEMBER 2006

Pakistan's statement on Elimination of Racism and Racial Discrimination

Mr. Chairman,

The Pakistan delegation associates itself with the statement made by South Africa on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. We would, however, like to highlight the following points, on this important subject, from our national perspective.

Mr. Chairman,

2. Racism and racial discrimination negate the basic principle of 'equality of all human beings in dignity and rights', which is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other instruments of human rights law.

3. The existence of institutionalized forms of racism in the past had been responsible for grave injustices and intense conflicts in the society. The adoption of the International Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in the second half of the 20th century was a milestone in the joint and enduring struggle of the international community against apartheid and other forms of discrimination on the basis of race, color, descent or national and ethnic origin.

4. However, as noted by the report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism (E/CN.4/2006/54), new and more subtle forms of racism and racial discrimination have emerged in various parts of the world which reflect a deep political, ethical and intellectual crisis. The report highlights a striking factor, common in many contemporary societies, which is the "normalization of racism and the legitimization of the racist and xenophobic ideology of extreme right wing parties for political ends".

5. It is ironic that since the 2001 Durban World Conference against Racism, racial discrimination has gained a new political form and legitimacy in guise of defending "national identity", promoting "national preference" and combating illegal immigration. This has been coupled with the establishment of legal norms which actively discriminate and violate the fundamental human rights of minorities groups and migrants.

6. This growing political acceptance of racism in many democratic societies has resulted in the marked erosion of fundamental values and its popular impact, and is shaking the very foundations of the democratic systems. Indeed, the

peaceful integration of immigrant communities is the obligation of the receiving countries. Such integration should not be at the cost of suppressing the separate cultural or religious identity of the migrants but by encouraging its assimilation to promote diversity and pluralism.

Mr. Chairman,

7. Despite numerous debates, discussions and assurances to the contrary, Islam continues to be identified with terrorism and Muslim religious observance and Muslims themselves continue to be viewed as a security problem not only in law and discriminatory judicial and administrative practice, but also through the intellectual and ideological validation of Islamophobia.

8. This phenomena is visible even in historically tolerant Western countries, as evident from the frequent statements by politicians and representatives of governments passing judgment over the basic rights of Muslims and their ability to practice their culture and religion in freedom and without fear of persecution. Such manifestations of bigotry and intolerance, in all forms, shapes and manifestations, must be opposed at the national and international level. Hate speech against manifestations of religious and cultural practices must be condemned with the same zeal with which the fight against terrorism is being pursued.

Mr. Chairman,

9. The defamation of Islam, and discrimination against Muslims, represents the most conspicuous demonstration of contemporary racism and intolerance. The proliferation of offensive remarks by certain religious leaders and other personalities attacking Islam and the Holy Prophet (PBUH), are clear manifestations of religious bigotry and demagoguery. It is unfortunate that the world media -- proclaiming the premise of free speech -- has so callously allowed such defamation and blasphemy to be disseminated against one religion. Unfortunately, with very few exceptions, the voice of the usually vocal defenders of religious tolerance and non-discrimination -- the United Nations, the human rights officials and special mechanisms as well as liberal politicians -- has been deafening in its silence. Indeed, the people of the world must not succumb to the conspiracies of those who desire to provoke a clash of civilizations and cultures but strive to promote a Culture of Peace through dialogue and cooperation.

Mr. Chairman,

10. The report of the Special Rapporteur entitled, "Situation of Muslims and Arab peoples in various parts of the world" cites that minority Muslim groups around the globe face retribution in their host countries for the actions taken by

terrorists. There has been a stark rise of hate crimes against Muslims in many Western countries. According to the European Monitoring Centre for Racism and Xenophobia, after the London bomb attacks of 7 July 2005, there was a quasi-instantaneous increase in the number of incidents of antagonism towards Muslim communities in most European States.

11. There seems to be a notion among the general populace that innocent people who go about their daily lives in conformity with the law and society can be held accountable and victimized for the actions of terrorists, just because they happen to share the same religious beliefs. All religious profiling should be outlawed and Governments in these countries should be obligated to protect the rights and ensure the safety of men and women who have not committed any crimes but are labeled and persecuted for the crimes of others.

Mr. Chairman

12. Pakistan strongly denounces racism and racial discrimination in all its forms and manifestations. We also denounce the growing trends of normalization of racism, and xenophobia for political ends, the political legitimization of racism and the discrimination of minorities based on this legitimization. The doctrines of racism, which discriminate among human beings on the basis of color, race and social stratification, are against our traditions and religious teachings. Pakistan, therefore, would continue to be part of international efforts for the complete elimination of racism and racial discrimination from the world.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.