



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

### Thirteenth session

Agenda item 9

**Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms  
of intolerance, follow-up and implementation of the  
Durban Declaration and Programme of Action**

### **Joint written statement\* submitted by the Association for World Education (AWE) and the World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ), non-governmental organizations on the roster**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[26 February 2010]

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\* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

## **Call to Condemn Judeophobia / Antisemitism in the Middle East**

### **Introduction: Human Rights Council Ad Hoc Committee & Defamation of Religions Report**

1. In its decision 3/103 the Council decided to establish an Ad Hoc Committee on the elaboration of Complementary Standards. At the 2nd session of the committee, from 19-30 October 2009, discrimination based on religion or beliefs, incitement to racial, ethnic, national and religious hatred, and defamation of religion, hate speech and genocide were all debated at length.
2. In a letter (29 October 2010) to Committee Chairman Algerian Ambassador Idriss Jazaïry, Pakistan Ambassador Zamir Akram, OIC Group Coordinator on Human Rights and Humanitarian Issues, explained: “The OIC attaches immense importance to the issue of combating all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Accordingly, it has supported and remained constructively engaged with all UN initiatives and activities and activities on the subject.”<sup>1</sup>
3. The Report 2 of the High Commissioner for Human Rights – on the implementation of Human Rights Council Resolution 10/22: ‘Combating defamation of religions’, expresses “deep concern over the negative stereotyping of religions and manifestations of discriminations in matters of religion or belief [...] deep concern was also expressed over the frequent and wrong association of Islam with terrorism, the ethnic and religious profiling of Muslim minorities in the aftermath of the tragic events of 11 September 2001 and the stigmatization of Muslim minorities.” (§1)
4. Information provided by Algeria and Pakistan and the HCHR’s comments on the OIC is pertinent:
  - Algeria: “Article 298 of the Criminal Code declares punishable (...) all instances of defamation or insults committed against one or more persons belonging to an ethnic or philosophic group, or to a religion, provided such defamation is intended to incite to hatred among citizens or residents (...) Any offence of the Prophet or denigration of Islam and its teachings, by whatever medium, is punishable with three to five years’ of imprisonment, as well as a fine.” (II: Member States, §9)
  - Pakistan: “Pakistan, in its submission, gave an overview of global events affecting Muslims in the world, Islamophobia as a rapidly increasing phenomenon, the basic principles governing the relations of Islam with Christianity and Judaism, and the centrality of peace and dialogue in Islam.” (II, §18)
  - Organization of the Islamic Conference: “The OIC did not provide information on defamation of religions or measures adopted to address this problem in the geographical region covered by the organization. However in the Second OIC Observatory Report on Islamophobia, issued at the thirty-sixth Council of Foreign Ministers in May 2009 submitted to the Secretariat, the OIC provides an account of manifestations and incidents of Islamophobia in Western societies...” (III, §54)

## Antisemitic material openly on sale in the Middle East – and broadcasts on radio and TV

5. In the same month (October 2009), a European diplomat on a visit to Damascus was shocked to see quantities of Judeophobic/Antisemitic publications in Arabic bookstores, including such respectable centres as Maktabat al-Qital (Librairie du Combat), Dar Albyrouty and the Halbouni bookshop district. These books were also on sale outside major tourist hotels with English and French editions. On viewing these Judeophobia / Antisemitism ‘classics’, he noted Arab editions of:

- *Mein Kampf* by Adolf Hitler;
- *The Unleavened Bread of Zion* by of General Mustafa Tlass, Defence Minister of Syria for more than 30 years (1972-2004);
- *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*. This volume in French and English editions was also offered in U.S. dollars near tourist hotels. The cover has an English map of the Middle East, showing a red and black serpent which surrounds the entire Arab world, in the centre of which is ‘Occupied Palestine’ – without any mention of the word ‘Israel’.

6. Next to these Judeophobic classics, the bookstore windows overflow with pamphlets of pernicious opinions on Jewish history; claims that the Bible is false; that international Zionist conspiracies are in league with Freemasonry, the Donmehs and the Bahais; and ‘predictions’ allegedly from Nostradamus and Gog and Magog on Israel’s announced destruction in 2013.

7. Also available is a recent book in Arabic by Shams al-Din al-Ajlani: *The Jews of Damascus* (Librairie El-Ulbi, Damascus, 2009, pp. 430), in which Damascus Jews are shown savagely strangling a Capucine monk, Father Thomas and his valet in 1840 in order to use his blood in the preparation of their unleavened bread (Matza) for the Feast of Passover. The author tries to give the impression that his is a serious study. In this book one sees, for the first time in decades, photos of the ancient Jewish community – including institutions such as the Alliance Israélite Universelle building, which became the Palestine School in 1967. These were taken before the Jewish quarter of Damascus was plundered by mobs in January 1944, again in May and November 1945 – and November-December 1947 when the Jewish community of Aleppo was decimated and all seven synagogues wrecked and prayer books burned outside Aleppo’s Great Synagogue. A former flourishing community of over 40,000 Jews in 1945 is reduced to scarcely 30 elderly people today. Alongside some chapters on Jewish financial power – and prostitutes – one finds the gory details of the 1840 Damascus Blood-Libel Affair.

8. In this book by Shams al-Din al-Ajlani, purchased in Damascus on 17 October 2009 (a copy is available for consultation), a lurid Julius Streicher illustration reproduced from the Nazi *Der Stürmer*, titled *Ritualmord*, shows Jews killing children (p. 181). Two other illustrations show the infamous 1475 Ritual Murder Accusation of Simon of Trent. (p. 75; p. 179). When this specific case, with others, was raised in a joint oral statement on 27 October 2009 for AWE and WUPJ (2nd session: Ad Hoc Committee, Elaboration of Complementary Standards), the Syrian delegate, in a right of reply, denied everything on the grounds that the speaker cannot read Arabic. David G. Littman displayed copies of the illustrations in colour for all delegates to see and – for the Ad Hoc Committee record – left them with the Chairman.

9. After Vatican II (1965), Pope Paul VI denounced the medieval trial of the Jews at Trent as a fraud and all worship of Simon as a saint ceased. However, there has been no denunciation of the 1840 Father Thomas Blood-Libel Accusation. This calumny is still

perpetuated 170 years later by an Italian inscription and a detailed Arabic explanation in a Damascus church near the old Jewish Bab Touma quarter, used for religious services, by pilgrims and tourists.

### **Judeophobia at the United Nations / Blood-Libel Accusation at the Commission (1991)**

10. At the Commission on Human Rights (43rd session, 8 Feb. 1991), Syrian delegate Nabila Chaalan re-launched the 1840 Damascus Blood-Libel Accusation by citing as proof a book by Syrian Defence Minister General Mustafa Tlass (Fatır Sahyün / The Unleavened Bread of Zion). This was in reply to a statement by the main representative of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, David G. Littman, who had quoted from the preface by General Tlass :

The Jew can (...) kill you and take your blood in order to make his Zionist Bread (...)  
I hope that I have done my duty in presenting the practices of the enemy of our historic nation. Allah aid this project [publication of *Fatır Sayyün*]

11. In her right of reply, holding the book with its grim illustration showing Jews with prayer caps cutting Father Thomas's throat, Ms Chaalan made an extraordinary general Appeal:

We should like to launch an appeal to all members of this Commission to read this very important work that demonstrates unequivocally the historical reality of Zionist racism (...And) those who read the book can understand the reasons underlying the death of Father Tuma and those unmasked realities in Zionism.<sup>3</sup>

12. This shameful, medieval libel – denounced in 1841 by the Ottoman Sultan in a firman<sup>4</sup> – was also justified in a letter, dated 19 February 1991, from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic in Geneva, addressed to the UN Centre for Human Rights Office. This UN Revival of the 1840 'Damascus Affair' Blood Libel Accusation was widely covered in the media and the full documentation published then.<sup>5</sup>

### **What can be done now?**

13. Why does Syria – and other Member States of the United Nations and of the OIC – allow the circulation and sale of thousands of such books, the use of radio and TV programmes on such themes, and the ongoing teaching of this religious hate campaign in children and school textbooks? Why is such blatant 'Judeophobia' allowed to be propagated – without criticism by the UN, by Special Rapporteurs and by UNESCO – and all this during the UN's Second Decade of Human Rights Education, whereas all forms of alleged Islamophobia are pilloried?

14. A joint Appeal was sent on Human Rights Day (10 December 2009) to the UN Secretary-General, the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Director-General of UNESCO by AWE and WUPJ. This Appeal, entitled: To Condemn Defamation of Judaism / Judeophobia / Antisemitism in the Middle East is available here.<sup>6</sup> We call on the HCHR, the presidents of both the Human Rights Council and its Ad Hoc Committee on 'Complementary Standards', and all concerned Special Rapporteurs, to condemn this culture of hate, documented by many – especially Pierre-André Taguieff in several volumes.<sup>7</sup> It is time for the Council to act now.

\* Text prepared by David G. Littman, representative to the UN in Geneva of the AWE and the WUPJ

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> A/HRC/13/CRP 1. – For the letter of the Ambassador on behalf of the OIC, see Annexe 1, page 41.
- <sup>2</sup> A/ HRC/13/57 (Report on implementation, HRC Res. 10/22: Combating defamation of religions)
- <sup>3</sup> The speaker: “I do not wish to speak at great length, because time is valuable, but I did wish to draw the attention of the Commission that the role of certain NGOs at this Commission seems to be to hamper the work of this important Commission. It would be a good idea for the Commission, whose aim is to promote and encourage human rights everywhere, to reconsider the criteria of participation of such organisations. (See also: E/CN.4/1991/80 – “Letter dated 19 February 1991 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the UN at Geneva, addressed to the Centre for Human Rights”; and E/CN.4/1991/SR.17 & SR. 18).
- <sup>4</sup> WUPJ written statement: E/CN.4/1991/NGO/49 (8 March 1991), containing the text in English of the *Firman Hatt-I Hümayun* promulgated 6 Nov. 1840 by Caliph & Ottoman Sultan Abdul Mejid (HRHW, N°10, pp. 34-35)
- <sup>5</sup> All UN documentation was published by David G. Littman in, *Human Rights and Human Wrongs*, N° 10 – Supplementary Document Section: 1991 Revival at United Nations / 1840 ‘Damascus Affair’ Blood-Libel Accusation (WUPJ: Genève, 10 June 1991, pp. 58 (with media reports and 1983 ed. book cover: *Fatîr Sahyîin*; and, *Human Rights and Human Wrongs*, N° 11– 2<sup>nd</sup> Supplementary Document Section: 1991 Revival at UN / Blood- Libel ‘Damascus Affair’ – Correspondence & Consequences (WUPJ, Genève, 20 Jan. 1992, pp. 32).
- <sup>6</sup> See: AWE / WUPJ: Defamation of Judaism & Jews by ISESCO (OIC): 60<sup>th</sup> UDHR Anniversary at UN (A/HRC/10/NGO/29)
- <sup>7</sup> Pierre-André Taguieff : Philosophe, politologue, historien; directeur, recherche au CNRS attaché au Centre de recherches politiques de Sciences Po; enseigne à l’Institut d’études politiques, Paris.  
Ouvrages publiés ou dirigés : *La Force du préjugé. Essai sur le racisme et ses doubles*, Paris 1988 ; *Les Protocoles des sages de Sion. Faux et Usages de faux*, Paris, 1992 / rééd. 2004 ; *La Nouvelle Judéophobie*, Paris, 2002 ; *Prêcheurs de haine. Traversée de la judéophobie planétaire*, Paris, 2004 ; *La Judéophobie des Modernes*, Paris, 2008 ; *Les Manuels scolaires palestiniens*, Paris 2008 ; *La Nouvelle propagande anti-juive, l’affaire al-Dura en perspective*, PUF, Paris, 2010.

**Association for World Education****World Union for Progressive Judaism**

**UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon; UNHCHR Nevanethem Pillay;**

**UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova**

**10 December 2009 Human Rights Day APPEAL**

**To Condemn Defamation of Judaism / Judeophobia / Antisemitism in the Middle East**

On 12 January 2009 we sent you a Public Complaint (and to UN-Geneva Director-General Sergei Ordzhonikidze and the then UNHRC President Martin I. Uhomoibhi) concerning two hate books, published and circulated by ISESCO, the Islamic Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization. They contain venomous attacks against Jews, a general defamation of Judaism and a symbolic reference to an infamous forgery used by the Nazis. Both books were displayed at an OIC event at the Palais des Nations ‘on the occasion of the 60th Anniversary of the UDHR’ (19 December 2008). To support these grave accusations, we provided substantive documentation: An explanatory page regarding the event and background data and six pages of extracts from the two ISESCO books. [AWE /WUPJ: Defamation of Judaism & Jews by ISESCO (OIC): 60th UDHR Anniversary at the UN (A/HRC//10/29)]

The only reply received came from Mr. Ahmed Sayyad, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for External Relations and Cooperation in which he referred us to UNESCO’s Constitution, stressing that: “the promotion of dialogue as a means of building peace is at the core of UNESCO’s mission.” He mentioned other UNESCO decisions, in particular Decision 174 EX/46, adopted in April 2006. However, he provided no reply on the two books containing much religious and racial hatred against Jews and Judaism, although ISESCO – the cultural wing of the OIC and its 56 UN Member States – has very close ties with UNESCO. A higher standard is to be expected from an international body.

On 30 January 2009 another ‘Appeal’ was sent in which we provided reliable evidence from an Egyptian TV Channel al-Rahma (Mercy) – allegedly owned by Egyptian Sheikh Muhammad Hassan. It had aired a show on 27 January 2009 featuring Egyptian cleric Amin Al-Ansari, who commented

on the footage of prisoners being tortured in Dachau, Mauthausen and Belsen, while he declared: "This is what we hope will happen but, Allah willing, at the hand of the Muslims."

On 14 August 2009, we referred to more Egyptian TV testimony of a culture of hate, including the teaching of young children that "Jews are offspring of snakes and vipers". On 12 October 2009, three days before the 12th HRC Special Session on Gaza and the Goldstone Report, Egyptian cleric Amin Al-Ansari again appeared on Al-Rahma TV, declaring that the Prophet Muhammad had announced that: "Judgment Day will not come before the Muslims fight the Jews and kill them." "The Muslims will kill the Jews. Be patient. All the trees and all the stones will say: 'Oh Muslim, oh servant of Allah, there is a Jew behind me, come and kill him.'" This 'saying' or hadith is article 7 of the genocidal Charter of Hamas, yet it was not even referred to in the Goldstone Gaza Report.

Harsh anti-Zionist, Judeophobic /Antisemitic themes constantly appear in the Syrian media – the latest on Radio Damascus (1 December 2009 at 19:07), once again employing the heinous forgery: The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, stating that: "The Protocols allow for the killing of non-Jewish children..." We provided several other examples in an oral statement to the 2nd session of the Ad Hoc Committee of the HRC (27 October 2009), a French copy of which is attached to this Appeal.

Today's Human Rights Day message by the newly-elected Director-General of UNESCO affirms: "Cultural or any other specificity must be aligned with respect for fundamental freedoms." We ask your Excellencies, individually and collectively, to condemn this culture of hate – of Judeophobia / Antisemitism / Defamation of Judaism – in children and adult books and in all Middle East media. We hope the Special Rapporteurs & UN State Members will start to act on this grave matter in 2010.

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