



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

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Agenda item 4

Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

### **Written statement\* submitted by the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV), a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

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

[15 May 2013]

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

Today the world of Islam is faced with a huge volume of opposition against Islamic culture and beliefs, which has become known as Islamophobia.

Islamophobia in today's world is not necessarily is not a phenomenon associated to the subject of religion, but on the contrary it's a purposeful attack against human rights and peace. Our evidence is the purposeful and organized incitements, destruction of religious sites, and killing of Muslims around the world through different means which is with the aim of forcing the reaction of Muslim extremists and therefore to conclude that it's an apparent religious war. The recent tragedies in Myanmar, Iraq, Syria, Pakistan and Bahrain are some examples of the above which show the concepts of Islamophobia in its worst forms.

The long discrimination against the Rohingya of almost a century, the terrible living conditions of this approximately one million ethnic minority and homeless people bordering Myanmar and Bangladesh, the participation or at least the turning of the blind eye of Myanmar security forces towards violence organized by local prejudiced Buddhists, and the inaction and indifference of the Myanmar government for the determination of the situation of this minority group, and the Bangladeshi government's indifference are all things that have caused the concerns of human rights activists.

A series of bloody attacks last year that killed hundreds of people and forced 125,000 from their homes as crimes against humanity.

The New York-based group Human Rights Watch says ethnic Rakhine nationalists from a powerful political party in western Rakhine state, along with senior Buddhist monks, encouraged coordinated attacks on Muslim neighborhoods.

The rights group says that while state security forces sometimes intervened to protect fleeing Muslims, more often they either stood idly by or participated directly in atrocities.

Just as the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar has pointed out, in the last two years we have witnessed a rise in violence between Muslim and Buddhist communities in the Mandalay central region of Myanmar, as a result of which 12,000 people have been made homeless and a number killed. Martial law was declared following this in four provincial towns of the region and emergency conditions declared. Reports have also been published on the spread of violence to Bago and Yangon. In June and October last year, in view of government statistics violence in the province of Rakhin left 120,000 homeless and 200 dead.

Government departmental discrimination towards the Muslim minority, the hate speeches of Buddhist religious extremists, and the violent actions of the security forces have resulted in the strengthening of racist trends and specifically directed against the Muslims in this country and as a result grave violation of human rights.

Another instance of human rights violations is the plans to control the birth rate of Muslim Rohingyas in Myanmar has been described as "chilling".

A government-appointed commission investigating sectarian violence in Myanmar has issued proposals to ease tensions in the region, including doubling the number of security forces and introducing family planning programs to stem population growth among mi

The commission report also recommends that Muslim Rohingya be segregated from Buddhists, but it acknowledges that is not a permanent solution to the problem.

There are reportedly 800,000 Muslim Rohingyas in Myanmar but the government regards them as illegal immigrants.

The Organization for Defending Victims of Violence expresses its grave concern over the spreading of violence against the Muslims of Myanmar, and calls for international institutions - the Human Rights Council in particular - to take serious steps in this regard.

The ODVV deems the recent incidents in Myanmar as examples of genocide and ethnic cleansing, and calls upon the Human Rights Council to take effective measures through the holding of a special session. Special sessions can be held with the request of 16 members of the Council, and can be effective tools for increasing the international community's attention towards this killings, and also further activities of international organizations in this regard.

Alongside the terrible conditions of the Muslims of Myanmar, ethnic and in particular religious clashes in countries such as Syria, Iraq, Bahrain and Pakistan are also causes for concern of the ODVV. The turning of the territories of these countries into scenes of conflict between religious groups, particularly the unprecedented attacks of religious extremist elements in these countries to settle religious scores, are serious alarm bells for the peace and tranquility of these religions. The rise in anti-Shia sentiments phenomenon in Bahrain, Iraq and Pakistan alongside the growth of the presence and infiltration of Salafi rebels and Al-Qaeda terrorist elements in Syria, is the result of the miscalculations of the west in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya. Now a lot of Christian and Kurdish minorities are getting attacked and killed in Iraq and Syria by extremist elements. Even though these elements might in appearance be Muslims, but deep inside they do not pay attention to the most natural and basic teachings of Islam. The brutal killing of ordinary people, and also desecration of Shia holy sites are indicative of a huge crisis which if left unresolved, it will not take long for the violence to engulf the whole region. And this will not be safe for Mediterranean Europe and North Africa.

In accordance with its primary principles and objectives, the ODVV expresses its strong opposition to any forms of extremism, particularly religious and ethnic extremism. While stressing on the need for the sensitization of UN human rights institutions towards Shia-phobia, the ODVV calls upon the international community to intervene and prevent the growth of Salafi extremism in the region. We recommend the Special Rapporteur on religious intolerance to while concentrate and pay special attention to the subject, to prepare a report on the religious minorities conditions in Syria, Myanmar, Iraq, Bahrain and Pakistan; and to find the root causes of the existing violence, and to present member states solutions for putting an end to the pain and suffering of Muslim (Shia and Sunni) minorities in these countries.

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