

Statement

The Ambassadors of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation countries accredited to the United Kingdom take note with appreciation the resolution A/77/L.89 adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in its 77th Session on 21st July 2023 entitled “Promoting Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue and Tolerance in Countering Hate Speech”, and the Security Council resolution 2686 (2023), and the Human Rights Council resolution A/HRC/53/L.23 adopted on 12th July 2023 calling upon states to adopt national laws, policies and law enforcement frameworks that address, prevent and prosecute incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, and to take immediate steps to ensure accountability.

The Ambassadors take vigilant note of the two statements issued by the European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (Josep Borrell) on 1st and 26th July 2023, condemning the burning of the Holy Qur’an in the Kingdoms of Sweden and Denmark, the statement of the High Representative for the UN Alliance of Civilizations on 29th June 2023, the statement of the UN Human Rights High Commissioner on 11st July 2023, and the letter of the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres on 21st July 2023.

The Ambassadors take a positive note of the statement issued by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development office on 21st July 2023, which condemned the desecration and burning of a copy of the Qur’an in Stockholm, considering it "a grave insult to the Muslims all over the world" and reaffirmed that the United Kingdom condemns hatred based on religion or belief, stressing that "it will defend freedom of religion and belief for all, and promote mutual respect" amongst its people.

The Ambassadors support the Iraqi government's position in calling for an end to provocative actions that disrespect international legally binding human rights treaties and norms through contempt of religions and beliefs. Such These actions pose a threat to peace and incite a culture of violence and hatred.

The Ambassadors also welcomed the Iraqi government's commitment to the security and protection of diplomatic missions and its determination to respond to any attack targeting them.

The Ambassadors refer to resolution OIC/POL-03/EX-COM/2023 adopted by the 18th Extraordinary Session of the Council of the Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation on 31 July 2023 entitled “Repeated Crimes of Desecration and Burning of copies of al- Mus’haf ash-Sharif in the Kingdom of Sweden and the Kingdom of Denmark”.

The Ambassadors also take account of the emergency meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on 2nd July 2023 to discuss the prevention from burning copies of the Qur'an.

The Ambassadors underline that all relevant stakeholders including governments should redouble efforts to address discrimination, xenophobia, and hate speech in accordance with international human rights law. Acts contemptuous of any belief and/or religion lead to the polarization of societies causing extreme tensions provoking anger, hatred , and violence.

The Ambassadors emphasize that governments must not tolerate extremism or the promotion of hatred and Islamophobia, but rather prevent such practices which disrespect of other beliefs and which cannot in any way be categorized as freedom of expression.