

THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT AGAINST ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AND RACISM

IMADR Oral Statement: 28th session of the Human Rights Council
Item 3: Interactive Dialogues with the Special Rapporteur on minority issues

18 March 2015

Thank you Mr. President,

We welcome the report of Ms. Rita Izsàk's and her study on hate speech and incitement to hatred against minorities in media. The study can serve as practical guidelines for various stakeholders to take effective measures to combat hate speech in media including the internet.

We reiterate Madam Rapporteur's emphasis on the need to take structural inequalities into account when States tackle hate speech. With this regard, we would like to highlight difficulties for people belonging to minorities to take counter measures if there is a lack of protection from incitement to hatred and racial discrimination. In such societies, minorities can be easily subject to retaliation as a result of speaking up against hate speech, which can also escalate to hate crimes. Therefore, States should not leave hate speech issues in the hands of minority communities by simply claiming that they can exercise their freedom of expression to counter hateful messages. Minority communities need special protection measures to acquire equal enjoyment of human rights.

Moreover, it has to be reminded that minority communities are often not monolithic. Majority societies tend to categorise minority communities based on their broader status such as race, ethnicity or religion, which ignores diverse and delicate identity of each group. Such diversity of minority communities can cause difficulties to unite themselves, and take collective measures against hate speech. Therefore, as Madam Rapporteur recommended, States must involve both minority and majority communities in addressing hate speech and incitement. This is essential to create societies which do not tolerate discrimination against minorities.

While endorsing the recommendations of Madam Rapporteur, we urge States, which have not done so, to ratify the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD). We also call upon the State parties putting reservation under the Article 4 to withdraw it, and adopt appropriate measures to combat hate speech in conformity with the Convention as well as its General Recommendation No. 35.

Thank you Mr. President.