



The Permanent Mission of Egypt  
to the United Nations  
New York

بعثة مصر الدائمة  
لدى الأمم المتحدة  
نيويورك

**Statement by Minister Plenipotentiary Osama Abdel Khalek  
Deputy Permanent Representative of Egypt  
On Behalf of the Arab Group**

**At the General Debate of the Third Committee on  
Agenda Item 69: "Promotion and Protection of Human rights"**

23 October 2012

Check against delivery

Mr. Chairman,

Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are one of the most important pillars of our joint international efforts along with development, and international peace and security. Thus, the respect for human rights cannot be achieved without preserving international peace and security, and achieving development, in particular all of the international and sustainable development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

The international community efforts since 1946 resulted in the adoption of an integrated framework defining specific sets of rights and responsibilities in the field of human rights. The international community today has the responsibility to continue its efforts in accordance with the principles, priorities and international commitments it accepted within the framework of the two International Covenants on Human Rights, and other relevant conventions.

Mr. Chairman,

International cooperation must be based on mutual understanding, respect, while avoiding double standards, selectivity and politicization, in order to achieve the following:

- Achieving consistency and coherence between the realization of all human rights which are indivisible, and avoid prioritizing and confining their realization to political and civil rights at the expense of economic, cultural and social rights, in accordance with the principles of international law, and the complementarity relationship between international human rights law and international humanitarian law.
- Confront the growing sense of superiority that some have, based on a flawed assumption that their values, cultures, social and legal justice systems are superior to others, and their subsequent attempts to impose their own standards as international ones without an international consensus, while insisting on disregarding the cultural, social, and religious specificities of peoples.
- The protection of human rights, according to the world summit document of 2005, is the responsibility of member states on the basis that sovereignty equals responsibility; and that the role of the international community is to support national efforts to enhance and develop the capacity of national institutions in the field of human rights, while refraining from intervening in domestic affairs, and infringing sovereignty and territorial integrity of member states using as a justification notions such as human security, or concepts such as "Responsibility to Protect".

- Realizing the right to development as a basic human right is necessary for the consolidation of democratic principles. It also contributes to narrowing the development gap between the peoples of the world, and avoiding the repercussions of the phenomenon of globalization and immigration. The realization of this right should not be associated with conditional aid and development programs, which aim at imposing certain controversial notions on developing countries that do not enjoy international consensus.
- Refrain from resorting to the Security Council as a tool to deal with the human rights situations in the world in a manner that undermines the effective role of the Human Rights Council, treaty bodies, and special procedures, and infringes on the mandate of the principal organs of the United Nations as stipulated in the Charter.

**Mr. Chairman,**

The obscenities recently released as part of an organized campaign against Islamic sanctities is unacceptable and requires a firm stand. We have a responsibility in this international gathering to study how we can protect the world from instability and hatred. The Arab countries respects freedom of expression. One that is not used to incite hatred against anyone. One that is not directed towards one specific religion or culture. A freedom of expression that tackles extremism and violence. Not the freedom of expression that deepens ignorance and disregards others. But we also stand firmly against the use of violence in expressing objection to these obscenities.

The increasing technological innovations provide an important opportunity for the international community to use it in promoting respect for human rights. The media, civil society, and social networking are some of the main tools that can support national and international efforts to achieve full respect for all human rights. We must recognize the importance of using such evolution in a positive way to avert the attempts of some to misuse use it to incite hatred, violence, negative stereotyping and discrimination on the basis of religion or belief. These attempts have serious implication on international peace and security.

In this context, the international community must firmly address to all political and social movements based on extremism, discrimination, racism, promoting denigration and contempt of religions, and stultifying their symbols, beliefs, and followers. Such irresponsible acts that incite hate and violence should not be justified under any circumstance, even under the pretext of freedom of opinion and expression. Such acts must be addressed through: first, fulfilling our obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Convention against all forms of discrimination. Second, establishing a constructive dialogue that promotes global interaction in order to deepen our understanding of each other, on the basis of respecting our cultural and religious identities and specificities. Finally, and most importantly, promoting tolerance, proper dissemination of knowledge, correct misperceptions, and addressing the cultural and religious ignorance spread in many countries.

In this regard, the international community has the responsibility to elaborate a comprehensive international dialogue among all stakeholders, including traditional and new forms of media and civil society, to identify best practices in using technological innovations to address our international ignorance of cultures and religions, and to promote human rights education and training.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Egypt would like to make the following observations in its national capacity:

The achievement of the three pillars of the United Nations requires upholding the principles of democracy and the rule of law to ensure the effectiveness of the development process; and all

human rights are an integral part of this process. This was affirmed by the Arab revolutions, which demanded the realization of economic, social, cultural, political, and civil rights on equal footing. These democratic revolutions confirmed as well that democracy originates from within peoples and their realities, and is based on their value systems in all their dimensions, and reflect their actual needs. The international community should respect these values and priorities, and supports people's efforts to consolidate democracy, promote human rights, and use peaceful means to prevent the abuse of some of the principle of sovereignty to suppress human rights and fundamental freedoms of their peoples.

Egypt is proceeding at a steady pace on the road to democratization which started with our first free presidential and parliamentary elections. Egypt is currently preparing for new parliamentary elections, in compliance with the decision by the judiciary to re-hold such elections, thus reaffirming our respect for the independence of the executive, judiciary and legislative powers. Egypt has also taken the necessary measures to ensure the rule of law by holding accountable those responsible for human rights violations during the January 25 revolution in front of the Egyptian judiciary. Furthermore, several legislative amendments have been adopted to strengthen political rights and the formation of political parties; and new legislations are being considered to combat discrimination, and protect religious freedoms and to confront any irresponsible practices fueling religious hatred and incitement to violence. In addition, the Ministry of Manpower enacted new regulations for trade unions to ensure freedom of assembly and association, and the establishment of trade and labor unions. Finally, Egypt is in the process of taking the necessary arrangements to host the Regional Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

In this context, I would like to affirm Egypt's commitment to promoting and protecting all human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with its obligations under the international human rights instruments, in particular as regards the death penalty. In this regard, I would like to draw the attention of the Secretary-General to the need to scrutinize the information used in his reports presented to the General Assembly, in particular his recent report on the death penalty (A/67/226) which indicated that sentences of capital punishment were reportedly handed down to children under 18 at the time of the alleged offence in Egypt. Egypt invites the Secretary-General to read the texts of the articles of the Egyptian legislations which prohibits the imposition of life sentences and the death penalty on those under the age of eighteen, in accordance with Egypt's obligations under the Convention of the Rights of the Child. Egypt's national legislations are available on the internet, including on the official website of the Ministry of Justice.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Egypt will continue in its efforts to consolidate democratic values and the overall community participation, and ensure equality of all citizens in rights and duties in collaboration with the National Council for Human Rights, and the international community. It will also ensure the freedom and dignity of the Egyptian people.

**Thank you.**