

Permanent Mission Of The Kingdom
Of Saudi Arabia To The United Nations
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الوفد الدائم للمملكة العربية السعودية
لدى الأمم المتحدة
نيويورك

**Statement of the
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

**Before
The Third Committee
67th Session of
The United Nations General Assembly**

**Item (68)
Elimination of Racism, Racial, Discrimination,
Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance**

Delivered by

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Unofficial Translation

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Mr. President,

The Government of my Country presents its sincere gratitude and appreciation to Mr. Henri McDonald for managing the works of the Third Committee during the 67th Session.

Mr. President,

The position of the Kingdom on challenging racism and racial discrimination is based on Islamic SHARIAA which honors human beings' dignity regardless of gender, color, race or religion. Islam also views human beings as created from the same soul. Accordingly it stresses the importance of promoting the principles of justice and equality for all human beings. ALLAH the Almighty mentioned these facts in the Holy Quoran by saying, "O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted" (Al-Hujurat: 13).

The Rules and Regulations of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia include numerous laws that prohibit racial discriminations in all its forms. Article XIII of the Governance Statute states, "Governance in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is founded on the principles of justice, SHURA (deliberation), and equality in accordance with the Islamic SHARIAA (legislation)". One can easily note that the Kingdom's Statute collectively addressed the issue of protecting human rights. Article XXVI mentioned that the State protects human rights and prohibits racial discrimination in all its forms. In furtherance, the State emphasizes the principle of equal justice between citizens and residents of the Kingdom as Article XLVII stipulates, "The right to litigation is equally guaranteed to citizens and residents of the Kingdom". In general, the Kingdom's various rules and regulations in all social, economic, and cultural fields include articles and items that renounce racial discrimination and emphasize full equality for all human beings.

Mr. President,

The Government of my Country has undertaken many policies to create a society free from any discrimination. At the national level, it established King Abdul Aziz Center for National Dialogue, which represents a national effective tool with an objective to strengthen the culture of tolerance and peace between the members of the community. Consequently, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques launched his Initiative on Dialogue among the Followers of Religions and Cultures. The outcome of this Initiative was a very practical project that highlighted the Kingdom's policy and approach on promoting a culture of tolerance, peace, and the rejection of intolerance and racism. This project was the establishment of King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Center for Dialogue among Followers of Religions in Vienna. In this regard, the Government of my Country expresses its sincere gratitude and appreciation to the Austrian Republic for its continuous cooperation with the Kingdom and hosting the establishment of the Center in its capital, Vienna.

However, despite these valuable efforts undertaken by the Government of Saudi Arabia to eliminate the concepts of racism, hatred, and intolerance, the increasing pace of hatred and intolerance against religions in general and the negative stereotyping and hatred spread against Islam and Muslims in particular in many countries is of great concern to us. We stress that freedom of speech and expression should not be abused and taken as pretext to promoting hatred, hostility, and animosity against certain groups in the society.

The continuation of what is currently known as the phenomenon of (Islamophobia) resulted in several racist and hate incidents against Islam and its symbols, such as the brutal burning of the Holy Qur'an and the airing of an offensive and desecrating movie about Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him. These irresponsible actions require from us concerted efforts, at both national and international levels and among both individuals and communities, to promote tolerance and peace; and to raise awareness about the dangers of intolerance and hatred. In this regard, we wish to reiterate the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's position is dictated by the Islamic religion which ordains us to respect and revere all religions, holy books, apostles, and prophets; and commands us not to offend or disdain any religions, symbols, or beliefs of the others. We renew our call through this meeting to address this issue in accordance with what is stipulated in paragraph 150 of the Durban Programme of Action.

In support of the important role played by governmental and non-governmental organizations in the area of human rights and combating all forms of intolerance and racism, the Government of Saudi Arabia established a governmental specialized body known as (Human Rights Authority) and a non-governmental body known as (National Assembly for Human Rights). The latter is financially independent and is not subject to any supervision or control by any governmental agency.

At the international level, the Government of my Country contributed in international efforts in this area by being State party to several conventions and agreements that prohibit racial discrimination, such as the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. In addition, the Kingdom was always an active participant in the relevant conferences. It participated in the 2001 Durban Conference held in South Africa, in which the Durban Declaration and its Programme of Action were adopted. It also participated in the 2009 Review of the Durban Programme of Action in Geneva.

In closing, Mr. President

As we all look forward to live in a world dominated by the principles of justice and equality, a world free of racism, racial discrimination, and xenophobia, the Kingdom is of the view that this can only be achieved through dialogue, clarity of intentions, sincerity of wills, and a true spirit of brotherhood and cooperation from all member states. At the same time, the Delegation of my Country consistently stresses the need for Member States and international organizations to take a tough stance against anyone who would in any way offend, disdain, or defame religions, their symbols, or their holy books.

Thank you Mr. President.