



Mr President

I would like to take the floor in a national capacity to express Egypt's appreciation to the High Commissioner for her important statement issued on the 28th of March, condemning the tone and content of the film produced by an extremist Dutch parliamentarian recently released on the internet with the sole purpose of defaming Islam and its followers. We join the call by the High Commissioner for the respect for the protective legal framework in international human rights law, and her urging to lawmakers worldwide to discharge their responsibility under articles 19 and 20 of the ICCPR. We also welcome the High Commissioner's affirmation that while lawmakers should offer strong protective measures to all forms of freedom of expression, they should enact appropriate restrictions to protect the rights of others, and prohibit any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence.

We also commend the statement of the UN Secretary General in which he affirmed that freedom always comes with social responsibility and asked to guard against a small minority of extremists with a vested interest in stirring hostility and conflicts. Egypt welcomes the joint affirmation by three concerned special rapporteurs that freedom of expression though being a human right that must be respected does not extend to include incitement to racial or religious hatred, which is itself clearly a violation of human rights, and that public expressions that paint adherents of a particular religion as a threat to peace or global stability are irresponsible. We also join their call for urgently initiating a debate on the best way to ensure the complementarity and balance between the fundamental rights of freedom of religion or belief on the one hand and freedom of expression on the other, in addition to the cardinal principle and right to non-discrimination.

We also welcome the statement of the European Union ministers issued in November which rejected the equation of Islam with violence.

~~is it included already the case in regard to specific relevant cases~~

Egypt considers the film in question as yet one more manifestation of the abuse of freedom of expression which requires effective measures to be undertaken at the national, regional and international levels. In this regard, we welcome the announcement by the prime minister of the Netherlands in which he expressed his regret for the airing of the film and his refusal of its content. We look forward to the Netherlands and other western countries, to issue appropriate legislations criminalizing any such acts as they represent clear manifestation of racism and discrimination on the basis of race and religion. *as is already applied towards (other) other cases of similar nature*

~~On this occasion, Egypt expresses its disappointment at the vote of abstention by some countries last Friday on amendments that addressed these very same concerns. It is our hope that all parties in the future show a higher degree of sensitivity to the repeated requests by a growing number of members of the international community, for addressing the abuse of freedom of expression for insulting religions and their followers. It is our view that the Human Rights Council needs to rise to the challenge and respond to this emerging phenomenon thereby preserving the credibility of the international human rights system and affirming the universal and interrelated nature of all human rights. We hope the statements issued by the UN Secretary General, the High Commissioner and the three special rapporteurs will represent a positive step in the right direction in this regard.~~

I thank you.
