



# PAKISTAN

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT

BY

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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF PAKISTAN

ON BEHALF OF THE  
ORGANIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE

ON THE

RELEASE OF INFLAMMATORY DOCUMENTARY  
IN THE SEVENTH SESSION OF THE  
HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Geneva,  
1 April 2008

**Statement by Ambassador Masood Khan of Pakistan, on behalf of the OIC, on the release of inflammatory documentary, in the seventh session of the Human Rights Council, 1 April 2008**

**Mr. President,**

The OIC Secretary General and OIC member states have strongly condemned a sacrilegious documentary which has been released by a Dutch parliamentarian. The documentary tries to distort the message of the Quran and insults the Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him). Such insults and distortions cannot be justified on the basis of freedom of opinion and expression.

The person causing strife and inciting hatred himself is wrongfully attributing them to his distorted version of the holiest book for 1.3 billion Muslims. Three quarters of people of the Netherlands believe that this documentary will worsen the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims. It projects terrorists as interpreters of Islam and the Quran. Images of heinous acts of terrorism around the world are interspersed with verses quoted out of context to stereotype the entire global Muslim community. This is xenophobic and religious intolerance.

Muslims around the world have shown restraint. Such blatant provocation sparks anger and violence. Muslims and the Quran condemn violence in all its forms. Verse after verse in the Quran gives messages of peace and amity, of oneness of humanity, of pluralism and coexistence. The Quran says: Killing an innocent person unjustly is like killing all of mankind and saving a person's life is like saving all of mankind. It enjoins respect for religions, places of worship and sacred icons. It shows connectivity among Muslims, Jews and Christians as well as sensitivity towards all faiths. It says the criterion for righteousness is not turning one's face to the east or the west but to help the orphans and the needy and the wayfarers and to give freedom to slaves.

The Dutch parliamentarian has been reading the Quran selectively to promote his anti-immigration platform. Today it is Muslims; tomorrow it could be adherents of any other religion or denomination. Europe should not allow propagators of hatred to define parameters for their civilized polities.

We appreciate the efforts made by the Dutch government to stop the release of the documentary. We welcome Dutch Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende's rejection of the interpretation given to the Quran in the documentary and equation of Islam with violence. We agree with him that this documentary has caused offense - massive offense we must say. We welcome the statement of the European Union ministers issued in Slovenia which sharply rejects equation of Islam with violence.

We agree with Mr. Jorge Sampaio, Secretary-General's High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations, who in his statement has said that:

- a) the insulting and defamatory film is a deliberate incitement to discrimination, violence and hatred on grounds of religion, aimed at provoking and

- promoting social unrest, and encourages extremist groups within European societies to discriminate and marginalize Muslims immigrants;
- b) freedom of expression does not preclude the protection of people from racist, discriminatory and xenophobic language; and
- c) We will be losers if we fail to defuse this potential crises.

The documentary violates letter and spirit of:

- a) The UN Charter;
- b) The covenants on civil and political and economic, social and cultural rights;
- c) Articles 19 and 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights that proscribe any advocacy of racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence; and
- d) Security Council resolution 1624 of 2005 which calls upon states to prevent targeting of different religions and cultures;

The Dutch government has been proactive; but it should have done more. We urge the Netherlands to, without further delay, (a) complete its investigation about the civil and criminal implications of the release of the documentary; and (b) initiate prosecution against the author, under the Dutch law, for inciting hatred against Muslims in the Netherlands and all around the world.

We fear that such incidents are the tip of the iceberg. We should not let them spin out of control. Collectively, we should use political and legal instruments, and develop new ones, to stop willful and mischievous defamation of religions. The Council should explore new space to address this issue beyond condemnations and adoption of resolutions. The OIC has consistently called for drafting a new instrument or convention to combat defamation of religions.

Thank you.