



## **OIC Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC) concludes its 5th Regular Session**

**Jeddah, June 5 2014:**

The OIC Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC) held its 5th Session in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from 1-5 June 2014. The Session was attended by Representatives of Member-States, Observer States, Officials of the OIC General Secretariat, as well as the media.

In his opening remarks, Ambassador Mohammad K. Ibrahim, the Chairperson of the Commission, highlighted the importance of the role and work of IPHRC in supporting and strengthening Member-States' efforts in promoting and protecting the human rights of their citizens. To that end, the Chairperson, apprised the participants on the list of activities carried out by the Commission since the last session and enumerated the main issues on which it has been working in the recent past. He also thanked Member States' keen interest in the work of the IPHRC and requested their strong support for provision of required resources to the Commission for the fulfillment of its mandated responsibilities.

During the five day session, the Commission had in-depth discussions on all items on its agenda including human rights violations in Occupied Palestinian Territories; civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights in OIC Member States; as well as specific mandates given to it by the CFM such as Islamophobia, negative impact of unilateral economic sanctions on member states; situation of Rohingya Muslim minority, human rights situation in Central African Republic, and creation of mechanism for monitoring human rights violations against Muslim minorities.

The Commission expressed its disappointment with the continued and ongoing violations of Palestinians' human rights by the occupying power Israel. It strongly condemned the arbitrary practice of administrative detentions of Palestinian people as discriminatory and contrary to all existing international human rights and legal standards. It called upon OIC Member States to highlight these discriminatory practices at all relevant international human rights forums and requested the upcoming OIC Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) to consider referring the matter to the International Court of Justice, through appropriate channels, for an advisory opinion on its illegality

that severely impacts Palestinians' human rights. The Commission also reiterated its firm stance that Israeli occupation was the primary cause of all human rights violations, which impacts the full range of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of Palestinian people.

During the Session, the Commission considered and finalized two reports on the subjects of "Negative impact of economic and financial sanctions on the full range of human rights of the people in the targeted OIC States" and the "Human rights situation in the Central African Republic". Based on the existing international law and human rights norms, the first report calls the economic and financial sanctions as illegal, discriminatory and counter-productive to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and other international human rights standards. The report on Central African Republic, which was based on first-hand information acquired through an on-ground visit to the affected country as well as refugee camps in the neighbouring states, provides an overview of the ongoing human rights situation in the country with specific recommendations on how to address the state of affected Muslim population as well as steps needed to ensure avoidance of future recurrence of these events. These reports together with the Commission's specific recommendations would be considered by the upcoming 41st Session of the CFM.

The Commission also delved in detail on the issues of right to development and human rights of women and children. Discussions on these subjects were complemented by participation of experts from Islamic Development Bank and Islamic Fiqh Academy. It was agreed that joint seminars / symposiums would be held on specific topics and projects in these areas with a view to defining common positions/ views that would help Member States in better understanding these issues from a holistic angle.

IPHRC regretted the lack of response from Myanmar authorities on its repeated requests to undertake a visit to their country to discuss the issue of Rohingya Muslims. The Commission urged the Myanmar authorities to favorably consider its request, on priority.

The Commission also issued a press release condemning the factually incorrect and fallacious statement by President Milos Zeman of Czech Republic about Islam. It termed Mr. Zeman's statement as a clear manifestation of hatred that constitutes incitement to hostility and violence. The Commission reaffirmed that no religion should be equated with violence and extremism and urged relevant international human rights mechanisms to openly denounce such assertions.

The Commission decided to invite National Human Rights Institutions of Member States in its future symposiums/ workshops, with a view to benefitting from their practical experiences and expertise in dealing with these issues, on ground. The Commission further agreed to address specific themes during its next session and established an *ad hoc* sub-working group to monitor violations of human rights of Muslim minorities.

The Commission thanked those Member States who have provided IPHRC with their human rights legislative, institutional and policy frameworks related to items under consideration and urged remaining Member States to do the same with a view to compiling a list of best practices to be shared with Member States. IPHRC reiterated its call upon all Member States to expedite ratification of the statute of OIC Women Development Organization enabling its early establishment in Cairo. The Commission also finalized the launching of its website that would become operational from 1st of July.

In his concluding remarks, reaffirming Commission's strong commitment to the responsibilities entrusted by Member States in the area of human rights, the Chairperson expressed Commission Members' resolve to fulfilling their mandate by continuing to provide expert advisory opinion and recommendations to Member States on all issues of concern in accordance with the OIC Charter and Statute of the IPHRC. Amb Ibrahim also thanked Member States for their valuable inputs on various issues of interest to the Commission, which he added were crucial to the fulfillment of IPHRC's mandate. He also expressed special thanks to the OIC Secretary General for extending all services for hosting IPHRC Sessions and his continued support to the functioning of the IPHRC Secretariat.

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