

The Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission Closes its 3rd Regular Session in Jeddah Decides to visit Palestine and Myanmar to assess human rights situation

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The OIC Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC) concluded its Third Session in Jeddah today, Thursday, 31 October 2013. The 5-day Session was presided over by its new chairperson, Ambassador Mohammad Kawu Ibrahim from Nigeria.

The Commission had in-depth discussions on some of the very important contemporary issues such as Islamophobia and discrimination based on religion, human rights violations of Palestinian people and situation of Rohingyas Muslim minority in Myanmar. In this regard, the Commission strongly condemned the continuing human rights violations perpetrated by the occupying power Israel in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories. The Commission Members strongly condemned the policy of settlements in terms of its implications towards the whole range of human rights of the Palestinian people as well as stifling international efforts towards durable peace in the Middle East. The Commission decided to undertake a visit to Palestine (Gaza Strip and the West Bank) to ascertain the human rights situation on the ground with a view to making appropriate recommendations to the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM).

On the other hand, the Commission welcomed the recommendations made by the OIC Contact Group on Myanmar and hoped that the first visit by the Group in mid November will contribute to the realization of the rights of the Rohingya. The Commission decided to send their own fact-finding mission to Myanmar to assess the situation of Rohingya Muslims. It also considered organizing a seminar/workshop on interfaith dialogue regrouping Buddhist and Muslim religious leaders.

The Commission also deliberated on various aspects of the four priority areas identified in its first session, i.e., Human Rights of Women, Rights of the Child, Human Rights Education and the Right to Development. In order to pursue these issues in a more organized and focused manner, the Commission established four working groups namely the Working Group on Palestine; Working Group on the Human Rights of Women and of the Child; Working Group on Islamophobia and Muslims Minorities and Working Group on the Right to Development. While Human Rights Education, being a cross cutting issue, will be pursued by all Working Groups, an

ad hoc Working Group on contact and relationship with national human rights institutions (NHRIs) and civil society was also established.

The Commission briefed the OIC Member States on its interaction with other international and regional organizations and organs working in the field of human rights, particularly women rights.

As mandated by the Summit and Council of Foreign Ministers, the Commission also finalized and presented three reports on the subjects of Discrimination and intolerance against Muslims, the human rights situation of Rohingya Muslims and the negative impacts of economic and financial sanctions on the full enjoyment of human rights.

The Commission reiterated its request to Member States to provide information on their legislation on the rights of women and children with a view to studying their compatibility with relevant Islamic teachings and international human rights obligations and to come up with a compendium of best practices and model legislation on these subjects. The Commission also called for close collaboration with organizations and institutions in the field of interfaith and inter-civilizational dialogue, including the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Center for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICID) and the Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue.

The 18 member Commission is expected to formally meet for the Fourth Session by early February in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.