

## **IPHRC expresses deep concern about ongoing human rights violations in Syria. The Commission identifies women's rights, education, development and research as priority work areas**

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The first session of OIC's Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC), was held, upon invitation by the Government of Indonesia, in Jakarta from 20-24 February 2012 corresponding to 28 Rabi' Al-Awal - 2 Rabi' Al-Thani 1433. The 18-Member Commission, that is required to meet twice in a calendar year, elected Dr. Siti Ruhaini Dzuhayatin (Republic of Indonesia) as its interim Chairperson. The Commission expressed its gratitude for the Government and people of Indonesia for their kind hospitality.

Mindful of the need to empower the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) with a mechanism to promote and protect human rights in the Member States, the 5-day session focused mainly on elaborating its Rules of Procedure, and the Commission also took note of contemporary issues on the global human rights agenda. It was decided that the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights in OIC Member States; the human rights situation in Palestine and other Arab territories occupied in 1967 and human rights issues on the OIC agenda would be permanent items on the Commission's agenda.

The Commission expressed deep concern on the ongoing human rights violations in certain OIC Member States, particularly in Syria. It also expressed concern on the recent incident of burning copies of the Holy Quran in Afghanistan and the ensuing loss of lives.

During consideration of the relevant agenda item, the Commission identified the human rights of women and children, the Right to Development and Right to Education as well as encouraging research as immediate priority areas of its work. Human rights aspects on the OIC agenda with particular reference to providing technical support for capacity building and the need for institutional networking in Member States also featured amongst the crosscutting issues identified by the Commission. In its recommendations to the Council of Foreign Ministers, the Commission offered to assist Member States, upon request, in important areas including, meeting the reporting requirements of human rights mechanisms. The Commission also encouraged Member States to utilize the full potential of its expertise by referring matters pertaining to human rights and corresponding legislation for advisory opinion. Identification of avenues of interaction between the Commission and civil society was also encouraged.

The Commission emphasized the contributions of Islamic values to the universally recognized human rights. It recognized the importance of the cooperation between OIC Member States including through exchanging good practices. The Commission also discussed ways to assist Members States in the implementation of their international human rights obligations.

The Commission decided to set up a working group on the Rules of Procedure in the inter-sessional period with a view to finalizing them at the next session.