

## بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

**On the occasion of the 'International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination 2025', OIC-IPHRC calls for equality and justice, strongly condemns systematic racial discrimination against Palestinians, and support efforts to criminalize all forms of racial discrimination, including Islamophobia and incitement to hatred and violence based on religion.**

**Jeddah, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2025:** The Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC) of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) while observing the 'International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination 2025' reiterates the importance of recognizing, addressing, and eradicating various manifestations of racism across the world. Also, -IPHRC stands in solidarity with all individuals and communities around the world who continue to face the scourge of systematic and institutionalized racism, xenophobia, and related injustices.

Islam is the first religion that laid down universal fundamental rights for humanity, which are to be observed and respected in all circumstances. Islam calls for full equality among human beings regardless of their race, religion, language, ethnic origin or social status. Islam strictly prohibits racial discrimination and accords 'hukook ul ibad' or 'rights of the people' high importance. The Noble Quran explicitly conveys that the most honored among people are those who are righteous, emphasizing that superiority lies in piety rather than race or lineage<sup>1</sup>. The virtuous and time-honored mores, credited with the oldest human rights pact in Islam; the 'Charter of Medina', the 'last sermon of the Prophet Mohamed Peace Be Upon Him' which brought an end to all forms of racial superiority by stating that 'no white person has superiority over a black person' instead declared that most honored in the sight of Allah is the one who is the most pious and righteous.<sup>2</sup> These Islamic principles were later borrowed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other human rights instruments which reiterate that all human beings are equal in dignity and rights.<sup>3</sup>

Racial discrimination is a violation of human rights and fundamental principles of equality and fairness. It's prohibition is absolute, which is applicable in all matters pertaining to both in private and public life, as enshrined in all core international human rights instruments, including UN Charter, Bill of Rights, Vienna Declaration and Program of Action, International Convention on Elimination of All forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)<sup>4</sup>, Durban Declaration and Program of Action (DDPA), Cairo Declaration of the OIC on Human Rights<sup>5</sup>, 2030 Agenda Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and OIC Ten Year Plan of Action 2025 (TYPOA).

<sup>1</sup> Noble Quran Surah Al Hujurat: verse 13

<sup>2</sup> Al-Bukhari, Hadith 1623, 1626, 6361

<sup>3</sup> Universal Declaration of Human Rights , Article 1

<sup>4</sup> ICERD Article 1 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-convention-elimination-all-forms-racial>

<sup>5</sup> Article 1, Cairo Declaration of the OIC on Human Rights: <https://oic-iphrc.org/home/post/4>

The Commission stressed that the racial discrimination faced by Palestinians under Israeli occupation in Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza is a grave injustice that undermines the principles of equality and human dignity. The well documented reports of systemic marginalization, restrictions on movement, and unequal access to resources highlight the pervasive nature of this gross discrimination and apartheid imposed by the Israeli occupation forces against the Palestinians. The racial discrimination faced by Palestinians under Israeli occupation is deeply intertwined with the broader context of the genocide being conducted in Gaza Strip. The ongoing military aggression by the Israeli occupation forces, which have claimed thousands of lives and caused widespread destruction, exemplify the worst systemic violence and oppression faced by the Palestinians. These acts exacerbate the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, where civilians, especially women and children, are the main victims. The redressal of these injustices requires a concerted effort to uphold international law and ensure accountability for actions that perpetuate suffering and inequality against Palestinians, including by holding the Israeli occupation forces accountable for their war crimes.

The Commission observed with deep concern that despite global efforts, racial discrimination continues to thrive in various forms across the world, such as Islamophobia, systemic racism based on sex, biased algorithms in use of technologies, online and offline hate crimes, and exclusionary practices. The alarming rise of Islamophobia as a modern form of racial discrimination exposes Muslim minorities to prejudice, stereotyping, and violence. The *'People of African descent'*, as continuation of enduring consequences of slavery and colonialism, continue to suffer from exclusion and poverty due to intersecting forms of discrimination. Despite some progress in civil and economic rights, they continue to confront, direct and indirect and de-facto and de-jure, disparities in income, access to education and healthcare and opportunities to equal employment and justice. The Commission further underscored that racism disproportionately affects women and girls due to stereotypes and biases related to both race and sex which contribute to double burden causing systemic and systematic barriers in education, employment, and healthcare and subjected to violence and hate crimes. Stereotypes and negative portrayals in media further perpetuate these biases, contributing to persistence of harmful prejudices. These issues not only violate fundamental human rights but also hinder efforts to foster inclusive and harmonious societies.

The Commission highlighted that OIC Member States have played an active role to establish normative standards that have helped in the fight against racism. Almost all OIC Member States are Parties to ICERD. OIC Member States, in their respective national capacities, are meeting their international human rights obligations to implement non-discrimination policies as enshrined in Article 3 of ICERD which condemns *"racial segregation and apartheid and undertake to prevent, prohibit and eradicate all practices of this nature in territories under their jurisdiction"*. In this regard, IPHRC adopted a comprehensive outcome document on the subject of *'Elimination of Racial Discrimination: Islamic and Human Rights Perspectives'*<sup>6</sup> which provides a road map to actively engage with member states, civil society, and international bodies to raise awareness, propose actionable strategies, and provide guidance on aligning national legislation with international human rights standards.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://oic-iphrc.org/home/post/34>

The Commission, with a view to combat racial discrimination, including Islamophobia, urges the States to: (a) **Enact and enforce** comprehensive anti-discrimination laws that address both systemic and individual racism; (b) **Promote educational curricula** that emphasize diversity and shared human values; (c) Implement **Advocacy campaigns** to counter hate speech and misinformation targeting specific racial or religious groups; (d) **Facilitate meaningful interfaith and intercultural dialogue** to build bridges of understanding and cooperation; (e) **Strengthen international collaboration** to hold accountable those who perpetrate and perpetuate racial hatred and violence; (f) equip **National Human Rights Institutions** with reporting and redressal mechanisms for victims of racial discrimination for speedy justice for realization of their rights; (g) support adoption of a **legally binding Convention on the Right to Development** to eliminate root causes of racism. *noraalrshoud*

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