

OIC Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC) strongly condemned the growing trend of extremism and intolerance in the world and called for joint action to collectively address this menace

At an open discussion under the theme “combating extremism and intolerance”, during its Sixth session, which was held at the OIC General Secretariat in Jeddah on 4th November, 2014 the Commission strongly condemned any association of extremist ideologies and intolerance with Islam - a religion that promotes compassion, coexistence, justice and peace in its teachings in all aspects of one’s life.

Allah ordains in the Quran that “*And we have made you a median community / a people of moderation in order that you may be a testimony or model for humanity.*” [2:143] In another Surah, Allah Almighty expresses displeasure with the people of the Book on account of the excessive stands of some of them by saying “*O People of the Scripture, do not exaggerate in your religion beyond the truth, and follow not the vain desires of folk who erred of old and led to many astray and themselves strayed off the balanced way.*” [5:77].

Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) said: “*This indeed is a religion of ease. None shall ever argue against it but be defeated. Do therefore endeavour for solidarity and rapprochement, Spread good tidings and help each other in daytime as well as in dusk*”. He also cautioned against such attitudes by saying that “*Be cautioned against excesses in religion – Those who came before had collapsed because of excesses in religion*”.

The Commission affirmed that extremism and intolerance are the opposite of balance and moderation, which are in fact two of the most prominent features of Islamic faith. It is the absence of balance provided by moderation that creates the vista for extremism to creep in. Extremism involves exceeding the legitimate boundaries in terms of belief or action. It has been cautioned against and discredited in the Scripture and the Sunnah. Islam is a religion of peace, tolerance, moderation and respect for all fundamental human rights and freedoms.

The Commission attributed some of the causes of extremism and intolerance to ignorance, poverty, underdevelopment, lack of education, political injustices as well

as denial of human rights and fundamental freedoms including the right to self-determination. It urged the international community to address these underlying causes through a combination of economic, social, developmental and political solutions, rather than focusing on its external manifestations alone. Only through strong and unified actions at all levels and at all fronts, including prevention of financial and material support to extremists, would we succeed in our endeavors at combating the scourge of intolerance as well as to further promote the much needed dialogue, peace and harmony among cultures and civilizations, the Commission added.

Extremist ideologies, radicalism, intolerance and terrorism have nothing to do with Islam. Proponents of such ideologies are indeed the enemies of Islam, who wrongly associate our religion with violence and hatred that is used by Islamophobic groups to defame our noble and pristine religion and discriminate against Muslims in various parts of the world. The Commission strongly condemned all such acts that only strengthen the hands of the extremists and protagonists of terror on each side, which are threatening the social fabric as well as peace and security of affected societies. Extremists, in whatever name, who perpetrate crimes against innocent people, should be brought to justice, so as to ensure the rule of law and avoid impunity as well as to ensure peace and stability of respective societies.

Highlighting the importance of education and awareness raising in combating extremist tendencies, the Commission emphasized the crucial role of religious and community leaders as well as the Media to curb such tendencies by promoting the ideals of tolerance, moderation, mutual respect and peaceful co-existence. Member States were also encouraged to promote and strengthen existing mechanisms for inter and intra religious dialogue, which help in avoiding misperceptions and promote better understanding and mutual respect.

The Commission welcomed OIC and its Member States' upright stance in condemning the acts of hatred, intolerance and extremist ideologies perpetrated by groups such as Daesh (ISIS), Boko-haram and Al-Qaeda etc. as well as their efforts to counter terrorism. It urged the international community to join OIC Member States to collectively tackle the scourge of extremism and intolerance with resolve

and strength. The Commission also appreciated the OIC Convention on Combating International Terrorism and encouraged all OIC Member States to ratify it, as soon as possible. In this context, the Commission expressed its readiness to assist Member States in any manner possible.
