

FORUM: General Assembly

QUESTION OF: Religious Expression Through Symbols of Attire

MAIN SUBMITTER: Ukraine

CO-SUBMITTERS: Argentina, Australia, Benin, Botswana, Chile, Republic of Korea, Côte d'Ivoire, Costa Rica, Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, Indonesia, Italy, Mexico, Portugal, Romania, Seychelles, Singapore, Spain, Sri Lanka, Turkey, United Kingdom

The General Assembly,

Recognizing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, particularly Article 18, which upholds the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, including the expression of religious beliefs through symbols and attire,

Acknowledging the role of the 'United Nations Human Rights Council' (UNHRC) and the 'Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' (OHCHR) in monitoring religious discrimination and promoting policies that protect religious freedom,

Emphasizing the importance of cultural and religious diversity in fostering global peace, mutual respect, and social harmony,

Concerned about the rise of discrimination, intolerance, and violence against individuals based on their religious attire or symbols,

Viewing with appreciation that freedom to change one's religion and manifest their beliefs in private or in a community, through teaching, practice, worship and observance is a fundamental right stated by the United Nation,

Noting that discrimination and hate rise through harmful stereotypes of one's way of expressing personal identity through clothing,

Aware that discrimination regarding religious and cultural importance of clothing and symbols arise from lack of education behind its meaning and purpose,

1. Encourages Member States to establish a global framework for religious tolerance, in collaboration with UNESCO, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and the Alliance of Civilizations, through:
 - a. legislative action, including but not limited to:
 - i. establishing clear legal definitions of religious discrimination to prevent ambiguity in enforcement and judicial rulings;
 - ii. developing and enforcing comprehensive legal protections for religious expression, ensuring that any restrictions on religious attire or symbols are non-discriminatory and aligned with international human rights law;
 - b. policy implementation, by:
 - i. ensuring equal access to public services and preventing discrimination in education, healthcare, and employment based on religious attire or beliefs;
 - ii. encouraging workplace policies that respect religious attire while maintaining professional standards, allowing reasonable accommodations where necessary.
2. Calls upon Member States to implement educational and awareness programs by:
 - a. formal education measures, which shall:
 - i. integrate curricula that promote cultural diversity, human rights, and interfaith dialogue in schools;
 - ii. train educators to recognize and address discriminatory behaviour and language within educational settings;
 - iii. allying with educational institutes to respect religious expression, ensuring that any school dress codes are non-discriminatory;
 - b. public awareness campaigns, which may involve:
 - i. organizing nationwide campaigns to challenge stereotypes and misinformation;

- ii. partnering with community, cultural, and religious leaders to foster dialogue and mutual understanding;
 - iii. utilizing social media and digital platforms to promote inclusive narratives and counter hate speech, which denigrates a person or people based on their memberships in social groups identified by traits such as religion.
- 3. Advises that member nations balance national security concerns with the protection of religious freedom of expression by implementing non-discriminatory measures, including but not limited to:
 - a. the use of alternative security measures, such as biometric identification or temporary removal of facial covering in secure settings to avoid outright bans on religious attire;
 - b. requesting that security related restrictions on religious attire be subject to regular reporting and accountability measures to prevent abuse and ensure fulfilment of international human rights law.
- 4. Recommends the development of an international database on religious discrimination cases, managed by the OHCHR to track violations and legal responses .
- 5. Strongly encourages all member states to allow for an individual to express their religion, in public or in private, by use of religious symbols and/or attire.

6. Recommends governments to provide support and funding for religious denominations for acts such as but not limited to:

- a. building places of worship,
- b. partially pay clergy salaries,
- c. broadcast religious programming on radio or television,
- d. applying for broadcasting licenses for their own stations;

7. Emphasises that an individual has the right to dress however they choose to, which includes using religious symbols and dress, such as, but not limited to:

- a. Cassocks, chasubles, and albs,
- b. Hijabs, niqabs, and other headscarves or face veils,
- c. Tallit, kippahs, and Kittel,
- d. Prayer shawls,
- e. Turbans,
- f. Crosses,

8. Requests the Secretary-General to submit an annual report on the implementation and effectiveness of measures taken by Member States to combat religiophobia and identifying key challenges and opportunities for improvement;

9. Calls upon member states to implement restrictive laws referring to punishments for hateful actions towards members of a certain religion9. Calls upon member states to implement

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Punishment through mulct

punishing any acts of violence towards a religion, such as abuse, discrimination, hateful
campaigns, and displacement.

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- a) imprisonment depending on the severity of the hate crime;
- b) Punishment through mulct
- c) punishing any acts of violence towards a religion, such as abuse, discrimination, hateful
campaigns, and displacement.