



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/HRC/6/NGO/5
31 August 2007

ENGLISH ONLY

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
Sixth session
Item 3 of the provisional agenda

**PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF ALL HUMAN RIGHTS, CIVIL,
POLITICAL ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS,
INCLUDING THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT**

Joint written statement* submitted by the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU), a non-governmental organization in special consultative status, the Association for World Education and the Association of World Citizens, non-governmental organizations on the Roster

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[28 August 2007]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

Appeal to condemn calls to kill in the name of God.

- 1., In 1999, representatives of the Christian, Muslim, Jewish and other faiths and of civil society, meeting in Geneva, promulgated the *Geneva Spiritual Appeal* which called on global decision-makers *not to refer to any religious or spiritual imperative to justify any form of violence*. This appeal was reaffirmed in March 2003 in St. Peter's Cathedral, Geneva by Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Bahai and other religious leaders declaring: *Together we denounce all references to God to justify and foster hatred*.
2. We believe it is necessary for the Human Rights Council to condemn the radical ideology of Jihad and calls to kill and terrorise in the name of Allah.
3. We are fully aware of the importance of the concept of Jihad in Islam – widely interpreted as meaning “struggle” – both in the sense of personal struggle and in the struggle to promote Islam in the wider world. In recent years, however, it is the second meaning of Jihad that has gained prominence with calls for Jihad meaning holy war. Since the events of 11 September 2001, Jihad has become synonymous with the activities of radical Islamists. It is this meaning that we are addressing here, together with its implications for Muslims, for Christians and Jews, for those of other religions living under Islamic jurisdiction, for infidels and apostates and for women and girls.
4. It is not our purpose to attack Islam, nor, by turning the spotlight onto abuse carried out “in the name of Islam”, to condone the abuse of human rights by the followers of other religions, by military forces, by governments, or by non-state actors.
5. Abuse of human rights is no less serious, nor can it be justified, because it is carried out in the name of a religion or in pursuit of any “higher” purpose. We believe that acts must be judged by their consequences. Collateral damage is as much the responsibility of the perpetrators as is damage to the intended target.
6. By taking over the concept of Jihad for their own often violent purposes the Islamic extremists have created a problem not only for the targets of their hatred and violence, but for their co-religionists. Muslims now frequently find themselves in the position of having either to reject the actions and deny the religious claims of the extremists or to risk finding themselves accused of condoning abuse if they remain silent.
7. It is no defense of abuse to argue that others are equal or worse abusers, a dubious claim in any context. Neither is it a defense to argue that those who carry out abuse in the name of Islam are not true Muslims; the fact is they believe they are. To make the point more clearly, we would suggest that a Jihadist who cries “Allah u-Akbar” before blowing himself and others to smithereens truly believes that he is acting in the name of Allah. He believes this because he has been taught that “death for the sake of Allah is the loftiest of its wishes” (cf. the Muslim Brotherhood Charter and that of Hamas). These Jihadists are as much a threat to Muslims as they are to Christians or Jews and to the rest of the world.
8. We are drawing attention to the problem of human rights abuse carried out in the name of Islam or Jihad in order to challenge clerics, leaders and spokespersons who maintain:

- that human rights abuse in the name of Islam does not exist;
- that what others call *abuse* is justifiable under Islamic law;
- that such abuse as exists has nothing to do with Islam itself; or
- that persons who draw attention to this issue are guilty of ‘Islamophobia’.

9. We maintain that human rights abuse in the cause of Jihad is primarily a problem for the Islamic world, and we call upon senior Islamic clerics and Muslim leaders – especially the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), representing 28% of the Member States of the United Nations – to seriously address this issue and to condemn unequivocally this great evil.

10. We appeal to the UN Special Rapporteurs on Freedom of Religion or Belief and on Racism, and to the President of the Human Rights Council, to request the distinguished representatives of the OIC, the Arab League, and individual Muslim religious and secular leaders to unequivocally condemn not just acts of terror, but all those who encourage ‘Islamophobia’ by their calls to kill in the name of Allah or of Islam. The OIC and other States have an urgent responsibility to include such a condemnation in the resolution on “Combating Defamation of Religions” that they have sponsored since 1999 at the Commission on Human Rights and more recently at the Human Rights Council and in the UN General Assembly.

11. Finally, we repeat our appeal to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and to the High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour: “To Condemn Clerical Calls and *Fatwas* to Kill in the Name of God”. We attach below the text of our appeal dated 9 August 2007 which provides further documentation on this important issue:

12. Appeal to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the UN High Commissioner Louise Arbour, to Condemn Clerical Calls and *Fatwas* to Kill in the Name of God.

9 August 2007

Excellencies,

At the recent informal meeting of the Council on Human Rights in Geneva Pakistan’s Ambassador Masood Khan delivered a statement on behalf of the OIC in which he raised a delicate question, and asked whether “there is a disconnect between the Secretary-General and the Council.” He also suggested that the Islamic States would like to see a more “predictable relationship” between the OIC and the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Such attempts to impose censorship have become common at UN bodies and might explain why our constant calls to the Commission on Human Rights and its Sub-Commission – and to the OIC and the Arab League – to condemn unequivocally all those who kill or incite to kill in the name of God or religion were ignored.

More indiscriminate Jihadist attacks are anticipated daily. A policy of silence on this ideology of Jihad by Muslim spiritual and secular leaders, the OIC and Arab League – as well as the international community – implicitly condones this evil, an evil that should be condemned unequivocally by senior Muslim theologians as a “defamation of

Islam,” and certainly not condoned as was done on 4 April 2002 by the Great Imam of Al-Azhar, Sheikh Muhammad Sayyed Tantawi, and Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi on Qatar TV on 25 February 2006 – and by others since then. If this policy of complicity is accepted – not only by senior Muslim theologians but by the international community – the future for humanity will be bleak.

In face of this cult of hate, death and destruction against “the other” – we are appealing to you to condemn all calls to kill in the name of God or religion – any religion.

We are making available here:

– Our joint written statement to the last 62nd session of the Commission on Human Rights titled, Calls to Kill in the name of God or Religion: E/CN.4/2006/NGO/231.

[<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G05/149/20/PDF/G0514920.pdf?OpenElement>]

It contains documentation on Islamic religious leaders and clerics, and others who justify these crimes against humanity, as well as some of those courageous Muslim moderates such as Amir Taheri who regularly warn of “the real battle against the enemy of mankind.”

– Our joint invitation for a Parallel NGO Conference on: Victims of Jihad: Muslims, Dhimmis, Apostates and Women, held at the 61st session of the UNCHR on 18 April 2005, which lists the twelve participants. Also the Opening Statement to the above Conference of the joint NGO sponsors by Roy W. Brown, president of the International Humanist and Ethical Union. [<http://www.iheu.org/node/1547>]

– Our oral joint statement (with full notes) delivered on 26 July 2005 to the 57th session of the Sub-Commission on Human Rights by David G. Littman, a representative of the Association for World Education. It contains a list of the 15 NGO written statements [with UN references – that can be linked via Google] that relate directly to this Conference, and to the ideology of Jihad which Prime Minister Tony Blair – speaking in the House of Commons on 13 July 2005 – rightly called an “extreme and evil ideology.” [<http://www.iheu.org/uncampaign/subcom1>]

– AWE’s written statement on Judeophobia Today: anti-Judaism / anti-Zionism / antisemitism: A Growing ‘Culture of Hate’ (E/CN.4/2004/NGO/5), with an Appeal to the then Acting High Commissioner Bertrand Ramcharan, and a 1971 text by D.F. Green that analyses the genocidal dangers of racist hate – well illustrated by the Proceedings of the 1968 Fourth Conference of the Academy of Islamic Research, Al-Azhar University (Cf. *Arab Theologians on Jews and Israel*, Editions de l’Avenir, Geneva, 3rd edition, 1976 – with many passages on Jihad).

[<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G04/107/82/PDF/G0410782.pdf?OpenElement>]

For 40 years this ongoing campaign of hate through Jihad, Judeophobia and anti-Zionism has become endemic in the Arab/Muslim world and is creeping into Europe and others countries.

All of humanity is concerned by these assaults on our common values enshrined in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. We are calling on you – in your capacities as Secretary-General and High Commissioner of Human Rights – to raise your voices on this very grave matter. The poet John Donne’s ominous words are a reminder to us all:

“And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; It tolls for *thee*.”
