



### **13th session of the UN Forum on Minority Issues**

#### **Statement by the Coalition for Religious Equality and Inclusive Development**

#### **Agenda item 2: Causes, scale and impact of hate speech targeting minorities in social media**

Madam Chair,

The Coalition for Religious Equality and Inclusive Development (CREID) is witnessing an unprecedented escalation in hate speech online, which is creating a climate of fear amongst minorities. Perpetrators of hate speech act with impunity, while those who defend minority rights also become targets of online hate and intimidation.

In **Myanmar**, social media is used by the military and other actors to reinforce narratives advancing Buddhist supremacy, thereby further endangering ethnic and religious minorities. Online hate has contributed significantly to the massive ethnic cleansing and threats of genocide faced by the Rohingya Muslim minority. Hate speech against minorities has also been central to campaign strategies ahead of the 2020 elections.

In **Pakistan**, online hate has become a key contributing factor in the crimes committed against minorities, and yet it is frequently met with a lack of accountability. Online hate reinforces and exacerbates long-standing marginalization and exclusion, particularly for those who face intersectional discrimination, such as women from religious minorities, and those facing caste-based discrimination.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. Governments must adopt anti-hate speech legislation in line with international human rights norms and create the necessary administrative mechanisms to curb hate speech and hate crimes and ensure effective redress for victims and that perpetrators are held accountable.
2. Internet intermediaries should uphold the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Social media platforms should ensure that their Community Standards and Terms of Service do not tolerate advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred and that the rules are swiftly, fully and consistently implemented to remove all hate speech. They must recognize that they have a duty of care towards **all** their users.

I thank you.

Madam Chair