



Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran  
to the United Nations Office and other international  
organizations in Geneva

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**Statement**

**By**

**Seyed Mohammad Sadati Nejad  
Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran  
Before**

**13<sup>th</sup> Session of the Forum on Minorities**

**First thematic panel discussion**

**Causes, scale and impact of hate speech targeting minorities in social media**

**Geneva, 19 November 2020**

**Madam President**

The mounting number of attacks on migrants and minorities, in particular Muslim minorities, in some western countries has raised deep concerns about the connection between inflammatory hate speeches online and violent acts.

There is a grave concern that the response to the hate speech by the social media platforms has been uneven, selective, double-standard and discriminatory. The task of deciding what and how to censor has largely fallen to the handful of private corporations that control the social platforms and is mostly in line with their business interests resulting in increasing violence against Muslims and specific groups and entities and also mis-use of these platforms by terrorist and criminal groups.

These companies, on one hand, are constrained and dominated by the domestic laws of certain States and act in line with their interests, and on the other hand are can serve to defuse discrimination and head off violence against migrants and minorities.

Much of the world now communicates on social media, with nearly a third of the world's population active on Facebook alone. As more and more people have moved online, experts say, individuals inclined toward racism or islamophobia have found niches that can reinforce their views and goad them to violence. Social media platforms and the way they are controlled, also offer violent actors the opportunity to publicize their acts and disseminate their hate

messages. Researches on some European States, as an example, confirm a correlation between anti-refugee Facebook posts and attacks on migrants and refugees. In the United States, perpetrators of recent white supremacist attacks have circulated among racist communities online, and also embraced social media to publicize their violence.

**Madam President,**

We sound alarm over the continuation of selective approach and vague definition of prohibited contents, as well as introducing private corporations as the legitimate arbiters of censorship. The arbitrary interpretation of prohibited contents has resulted in discrepancy, unilateralism and politicization. We condemn mis-using hate speech umbrella to follow political agendas by some States and entities. The international community shall give priority to the subject and end to the continuation of the present calamity.

My delegation will deliver another Statement under item 4 to outline our position about relevant topics under discussion.

**I thank you Madam President.**