



Permanent Mission of the Arab Republic of Egypt in Geneva

**Human Rights Council
Forum on Minority Issues**

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Thank you, Mrs. President.

Egypt is aware of the need to combat hate speech and the danger of creating stereotypes about followers of certain cultures or religions, both of which have been on the rise in many in countries around the world in a way that contradicts the values of democracy, equality and respect for others, as well as violates the norms of international human rights law. Perhaps the most serious feature of this phenomenon in recent times has been the emergence of political parties whose ideology centers around racism, anti-minority or anti-religion, threatening social peace within states and the stability of international relations.

In international forums, Egypt seeks to support all initiatives aimed at combating intolerance and discrimination, including via the Internet, and within the framework of the Islamic Group, it submits a periodic resolution in this regard that addresses religious intolerance, stigma, and discrimination. At the national level, many initiatives and policies are being implemented to combat hate speech and spread the principles of tolerance, most notably:

- 1– The President of the Republic has been keen to attend the Coptic Orthodox Christmas Mass each year, and to broadcast His Excellency's participation in the media and make it available on social media, with His Excellency emphasizing on various occasions the importance of correcting religious discourse.**

- 2– Al–Azhar and the Egyptian Coptic Orthodox Church continue to work together as part of the "Egyptian Family Home" initiative to deepen the principle of citizenship and combat incitement to violence and discrimination based on religion, including online.**
- 3– Al–Azhar has established the Observatory for Takfiri Fatwas, which is tasked with monitoring Takfiri fatwas and ideas that are being broadcast online and confronting them by refuting them and clarifying the correct Islamic opinion, in different languages. One of the best practices that we recommend referring to in the closing recommendations is this experience.**
- 4– The Forum of Moderate Tolerance of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs has been established; and religious lessons and seminars have been held to emphasize the culture of dialogue and renounce violence, bigotry and terrorism.**

As for the legislation promoting tolerance and religious freedoms, it is important to note Law No. 80 of 2016, which governs the building and restoration of churches and their annexes. The Law guarantees for the first time in Egypt's history the procedures for issuing construction work permits for churches; approvals have been issued so far to legalize the status of 1,737 churches and service buildings, among the requests received from different Christian denominations. In addition to the above, the Egyptian government is restoring synagogues in Cairo and Alexandria as well as Jewish cemeteries in the city of Fustat in Cairo.

Thank you, Mrs. President.