



**CAIRO INSTITUTE
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS STUDIES**

Institut du Caire pour les études des droits de l'homme

مركز القاهرة لدراسات حقوق الإنسان

- Human Rights Council: 54th Session
- Item 9-ID on the High Commissioner oral updates on drivers, root causes and Human Rights impacts of religious hatred constituting incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence.
- Oral intervention:
- Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)

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United Nations should strongly combat discrimination and religious violence

The Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS) calls on all UN member states to take forceful steps to combat discrimination, violence and incitement to violence based on religious belief. UN member states have a responsibility to adopt policies that encourage inter and intra-religious dialogue and mutual respect. Furthermore, we condemn acts of religious desecration intended to demean and insult religious minorities.

However, religious apostasy and blasphemy laws, or legal restrictions designed to disallow and punish forms of expression or belief that are offensive to a particular religious community are, in fact, one of the largest drivers of religious discrimination and violence. This is especially true in the Middle East and North Africa. In countries throughout the world, blasphemy laws are regularly used to kill, imprison, torture, discriminate against and abuse Muslims, Bahai's, Christians, and other religious followers on regular basis.

These laws are also used by governments to carry out widespread repression of critics, human rights defenders, journalists, minorities, members of the LGBT community, women and anyone whom the government would like to marginalize and silence.

As such, a fundamental step to combating religious hatred and, most importantly, human rights violations resulting from religious hatred, is to ensure that apostasy and blasphemy laws are dismantled.

Any proposed solution that does not prioritize this goal is doomed to failure and will in fact provide those who are motivated by religious hatred with more tools to carry out further human rights violations.