

**Statement by**  
**His Excellency Dr Asim Ahmed**  
**Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the Maldives to the**  
**United Nations and other International Organizations at Geneva**  
**Urgent Debate on the Alarming Rise in Premeditated and Public Acts of**  
**Religious Hatred as Manifested by Recurrent Desecration of the Holy**  
**Quran in some European and other Countries**  
**53<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council**  
**11 July 2023**

Thank you, Mr. President,

We align ourselves with the statement delivered by Pakistan on behalf of OIC at this urgent debate.

The Government of Maldives strongly condemns the recurrence of the abhorrent act of the desecration of the Holy Quran. Despite the progress made in building bridges of understanding between communities and promotion of social cohesion, such acts of Islamophobia undermine all efforts to uphold the values of tolerance and coexistence. It only serves to fuel hatred and extremism in our societies.

The recurrence of this deeply despicable and disrespectful act hurts the religious sentiments of millions of Muslims around the world.

Mr. President,

The Maldives remains fully committed to the promotion and protection of human rights including the freedom of expression. However, the continuous

reoccurrence of this vile and disrespectful act cannot be conflated with freedom of expression when it is clearly a manifestation of hate speech.

Mr. President,

The Government of Maldives reiterates its call to end all abhorrent acts against Islam. Concerted global and multilateral action is essential to combat the rise of Islamophobia and to uphold the values of tolerance and coexistence, to foster respect, unity, and peace within and between societies.

I thank you.