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Human Rights Council.
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Agenda item. UPR Country – Austria

Individual Oral Statement- Islamic Human Rights Commission

Mr. President,

The Islamic Human Rights Commission would like to highlight their concern regarding discrimination Muslim citizens of Austria as well as foreigners residing there are experiencing. The Anti-racism institution ZARA based in Vienna, have reported that there have been over 745 cases of racial abuse against Muslim women who choose to wear the headscarf, with the number of verbal abuses on the rise. Furthermore, prejudice against Muslim women has become institutionalised where employment offices have often considered the headscarf as a 'disability' in a job search and rejected others for not being of Austrian origin. Such discriminatory acts are a violation of the 'European Directive on Equal Opportunities' which Austria is a party to, where it clearly states 'employers cannot discriminate on grounds of religion or race'.

The Anti-Muslim hate crimes taking place in Austria include incidents where over 60 Muslim tombstones have been desecrated. Furthermore a recent online video game was created, where the player is required to target Mosques and Minarets as they appear on the screen using a 'stop' sign. These incidents are an incitement of religious hatred and are xenophobic beyond comparison. The European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) stated that there is 'an atmosphere being created where Muslims are having to defend themselves and explain that they are not terrorists'. Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights, guarantees to everyone "the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes manifestation of religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance." The Austrian government must implement such laws in order to protect their citizens and maintain a peaceful society.

The Islamic Human Rights Commission is alarmed by the prejudice behaviour towards the Muslim community and towards foreigners living in Austria, and urges the Austrian government to take necessary measures to safeguard their rights.

Thank you Mr. President

