



17th March 2011

Human Rights Council.

16th Session.

Agenda item 6. UPR Country – Bulgaria

Individual Oral Statement- Islamic Human Rights Commission

Mr. President,

The Islamic Human Rights Commission would like to bring your attention to the plight of the Roma Muslims residing in Bulgaria, who have been experiencing prejudice by the Bulgarian people and as a result have endured some of the worst racism and Islamophobia on record.

Discrimination is institutional; with Roma families routinely denied access to education, employment, health care and housing. According to the Durban Conference Declaration, para: 2 it states when racism is combined with 'language, religion...victims can suffer multiple or aggravated forms of discrimination.' In this regard, studies have shown that despite the fact that Roma Christians are suffering prejudice and racism, they are yet in a better position than Roma Muslims. Such unfairness has led to the alienation of the Roma Muslims. The magnitude of the ongoing discrimination and poverty has resulted in many Roma Muslims converting out of their religion seeking a marginally better lifestyle.

The Bulgarian government has not made available any organised support to the Muslim Roma minority. The Islamic Human Rights Commission is alarmed that this situation is taking place within the borders of the European Union and urges the government of Bulgaria to treat the Roma people as they treat other citizens of the country, by providing them with the same standard of living as other citizens, in order to respect their rights.

Thank you Mr. President