



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

132nd IPU Assembly

Hanoi (Viet Nam), 28 March - 1 April 2015



Assembly
Item 2

A/132/2-P.4
16 March 2015

Consideration of requests for the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda

Request for the inclusion of an emergency item in the agenda of the 132nd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union submitted by the delegation of Jordan

On 16 March 2015, the Secretary General received from the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Jordan a request for the inclusion in the agenda of the 132nd Assembly of an emergency item entitled:

"Respect for religions and religious symbols, respect for freedom of opinion and expression".

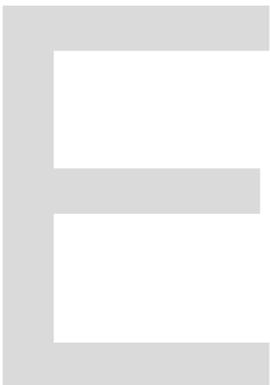
Delegates to the 132nd Assembly will find attached the text of the communication submitting the request (Annex I), as well as an explanatory memorandum (Annex II) and a draft resolution (Annex III) in support thereof.

The 132nd Assembly will be required to take a decision on the request of the delegation of Jordan on Sunday, 29 March 2015.

Under the terms of Assembly Rule 11.1, any Member of the IPU may request the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda. Such a request must be accompanied by a brief explanatory memorandum and a draft resolution which clearly define the scope of the subject covered by the request. The Secretariat shall communicate the request and any such documents immediately to all Members.

Furthermore, Assembly Rule 11.2 stipulates that:

- (a) A request for the inclusion of an emergency item must relate to a major event of international concern on which it appears necessary for the IPU to express its opinion. Such a request must receive a two-thirds majority of the votes cast in order to be accepted;
- (b) The Assembly may place only one emergency item on its agenda. Should several requests obtain the requisite majority, the one having received the largest number of positive votes shall be accepted;
- (c) The authors of two or more requests for the inclusion of an emergency item may combine their proposals to present a joint one, provided that each of the original proposals relates to the same subject;
- (d) The subject of a proposal that has been withdrawn by its authors or rejected by the Assembly cannot be included in the draft resolution submitted on the emergency item, unless it is clearly referred to in the request and title of the subject adopted by the Assembly.



**COMMUNICATION ADRESSED TO THE SECRETARY GENERAL BY THE SPEAKER
OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF JORDAN**

Amman, 16 March 2015
No. 5/33/1/1011

Dear Mr. Secretary General,

Pursuant to Article 14 of the IPU Statutes and Rule 11 of the IPU Assembly, the Inter-Parliamentary Group of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has the honour to request the inclusion in the agenda of the 132nd IPU Assembly (Hanoi, 28 March – 1 April 2015) of an emergency item entitled:

"Respect for religions and religious symbols, respect for freedom of opinion and expression".

The explanatory memorandum and a draft resolution are enclosed.

Yours truly,

(Signed)

Mr. Atef TARAWNEH
Speaker
House of Representatives of Jordan

Attachments: 2

**RESPECT FOR RELIGIONS AND RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS, RESPECT FOR FREEDOM
OF OPINION AND EXPRESSION**

Explanatory memorandum submitted by the delegation of Jordan

Insults to religions and religious symbols are uncivilized actions that have very serious consequences on all humanity, as they prevent the meeting of minds and dialogue and feed religious extremism and fanaticism, terrorism and violence.

The best way to remedy the problem – or even to prevent it – is mutual respect for religions and religious symbols, and dialogue. Such dialogue between believers is a human need that cannot be neglected, given the numerous principles all religions share. Regrettably, much of such dialogue tends to the unpeaceful and is even characterized by rancour. There must be greater awareness of the culture of dialogue in order to promote peaceful co-existence among believers.

Our request is supported by numerous international covenants stipulating and stressing the need to respect religions and religious symbols, including but not limited to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the UNESCO Declarations of Principles of International Cultural Cooperation (1966) and of Principles on Tolerance (1995), the 1994 Declaration of Santiago and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

The Preamble of the Charter of the United Nations provides that the objective of the Charter is tolerance among peoples. The 1970 UN Declaration of the Principles of International Law provides that all countries are to cooperate on respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all and to put an end to religious fanaticism. In addition, the 1981 UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief provides that discrimination on religious grounds is a violation of the UN Charter.

The followers of Islam acknowledge the existence of other religions. Islam also gives the followers of those religions the right to exercise their religious practices freely within Islamic States, and regards non-Muslims as citizens and an integral thread in the fabric of the nation.

Freedom of opinion and expression should not be used as a pretext for insulting others' lives, reputations, religions, holy shrines or practices. In today's world, the term "religious symbols" refers to prophets, places of worship and holy books. As a gesture of commitment, the religion of Islam obliges all its followers to believe in and respect all prophets, and to believe in holy books.

In the light of the above, the delegation of Jordan requests the IPU and its Member Parliaments to approve the inclusion of this emergency item in the agenda of the 132nd IPU Assembly, as it serves the common interests of the international community and will help us avert the negative consequences of not handling this issue as we should and as soon as possible.

**RESPECT FOR RELIGIONS AND RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS, RESPECT FOR FREEDOM
OF OPINION AND EXPRESSION**

Draft resolution submitted by the delegation of JORDAN

The 132nd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

- (1) *Taking into consideration* that insults to religions and religious symbols are uncivilized actions that have serious consequences on all humanity, prevent the meetings of minds and dialogue, and feed religious extremism and fanaticism, terrorism and violence,
- (2) *Confirming* that the best – if not the only – way to remedy the problem is to promote mutual respect among believers with a view to achieving civilized co-existence,
- (3) *Convinced* of the need to promote dialogue between believers, to protect freedom of opinion and expression in the light of the principles they share, and to transform such dialogue from disputes into peaceful discussions in order to promote peaceful co-existence,
- (4) *Referring* to the 1981 UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, which provides inter alia that discrimination on religious grounds is a violation of the UN Charter,
- (5) *Stressing* the need to protect freedom of opinion and expression while at the same time not insulting others' lives, reputations, religions, books, symbols, practices or holy shrines,
 1. *Acknowledges* the existence of cultural and religious diversity and regards this to be a healthy phenomenon that serves the common interests of humans regardless of their religion;
 2. *Calls for* the adoption of a vehicle of dialogue in order to reach a state of understanding, wisely and objectively, without insulting the beliefs of others;
 3. *Strongly condemns* insults against any religion, its values, principles, books, symbols, practices or holy shrines;
 4. *Stresses* the spiritual value of religions and the fundamental role they play in solving humanitarian problems and tackling the various challenges faced by the international community;
 5. *Condemns* those who foster conflicts of religion and civilization, given the harm they cause to the world's peoples;
 6. *Urges* that solutions be found to the problems of religious and ethnic minorities so as to promote social peace and co-existence;
 7. *Confirms anew* that civilization is a human product to which all religions have contributed;
 8. *Encourages* the holding of conferences and seminars for all believers so as to kindle constructive dialogue among civilizations and cultures;
 9. *Calls for* media and educational institutions to adopt a culture of tolerance and moderation;
 10. *Underscores* that freedom of opinion and expression are fundamental rights for all but do not permit insults against religions or their symbols and followers;
 11. *Calls for* an international convention to prevent disrespect for religions and religious symbols, which constitutes a fertile breeding ground for disputes between believers and represents a danger to all humanity.