

**Item 6: UPR Adoptions France 54<sup>th</sup> Session Human Rights Council,  
29 September 2023**

**Agenda Item 6 Universal Periodic Review**

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Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC) is a not-for-profit campaign, research and advocacy organisation founded and based in the United Kingdom. It was set up in 1997 and works for redress of human rights violations and a better understanding of rights and norms across confessional, ethnic, national, political and other boundaries.

IHRC has consultative status with the UN – ECOSOC.

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**Speaker: Jawad Husain**

President,

The Islamic Human Rights Commission is deeply concerned with the continued discrimination against racial and religious minorities, especially Muslims, by state authorities, politicians and media platforms.

The high profile shooting of Nahel Merzouk by police in July 2023 in Naneterre, which has been condemned by the UN, is one such example of structural racism and brutality and discrimination against racial and religious minorities.

The recent abaya ban in state schools has targeted one particular community, Muslims and especially Muslim women. Like the burkini ban and the hijab ban in educational institutions and in certain instances in employment it prevents Muslims from fully participating as citizens. These discriminatory acts not only harm the individuals directly affected but also undermine the fundamental principles of equality and inclusivity that France claims to uphold. They otherise Muslims and send the message that it is acceptable to treat Muslims unequally.

Moreover, restrictive laws on what Muslim women can wear limit their individual autonomy, access to education, employment and as such clearly violate the principle of freedom of religious expression. The shrinking space for freedom of expression and freedom of religion is a growing concern in France. Muslim and Palestinian activists have faced challenges in expressing their opinions and advocating for their causes, leading to a restricted and stifled public discourse.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that these issues are exacerbated by the actions of certain politicians and media outlets that target Muslims, migrants, and racial minorities. The rhetoric and policies employed by these individuals and institutions contribute to a climate of fear, division, and prejudice. Such actions undermine social cohesion and hinder efforts to foster an inclusive and harmonious society.

Thank you for your attention.