



General Assembly President expresses concern at Swiss ban on minarets



Minaret of the Mahmood Mosque in Zurich, Switzerland

2 December 2009 – The President of the General Assembly today added his voice to a chorus of United Nations concern over the weekend referendum in Switzerland which outlawed the erection of new minarets.

Ali Treki hopes the Swiss Government “will take responsible steps” to prevent any negative consequences emerging from the referendum, the Assembly President’s spokesperson Jean-Victor Nkolo told journalists at UN Headquarters in New York.

“The freedom to manifest one’s religion in worship is a fundamental human right,” he said. “And any incitement to discrimination on the basis of religion should be prohibited by law. All efforts should be aimed at improving the relations between cultures and religions.”

Dr. Treki’s comments follow earlier statements from Navi Pillay, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and Asma Jahangir, the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, who have both expressed dismay at the results of Sunday’s vote and its impact on the Muslim community in Switzerland and the wider population.

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