

Holy See to UN: Work Together to Promote Person's Dignity

Laments Lack of Attention to Religious Freedom

NEW YORK, NOV. 4, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Respect for human rights and the promotion of human dignity are key to eliminating the universal "scourge" of racism, religious intolerance and xenophobia, says the Holy See delegate to the United Nations.

Archbishop Francis Chullikatt, permanent observer of the Holy See at the United Nations, made this conclusion Monday in his remarks to the U.N. General Assembly on the topic of contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

The Holy See, in keeping with its view of "universal brotherhood," has often stated that "racism and racial discrimination in any form or theory are morally unacceptable," the archbishop said, "and that national and local authorities along with civil society must work together to honor the dignity of the human person without regard to race, sex, national origin, religion or social circumstances."

Furthermore, it is the "primary duty" of every national government to protect its citizens from this sort of discrimination. Failing that, it is the duty of the international community to address, through juridical means, to "protect those citizens from grave and sustained violations of human rights."

Archbishop Chullikatt agreed with the report that real change in regard to racism and racial discrimination must come from within each individual through moral and spiritual education, and that laws can only achieve so much. To this end, the archbishop explained, the Catholic Church's activities in the realm of academics, morality, and spirituality has been a major contribution in the promotion of human dignity of each individual, from conception to natural death.

Religious freedom

Religious freedom today continues to elude many believers around the world, the archbishop said, just as racial or ethnic discrimination persists in every human community, despite the efforts of governments and people of good will. These efforts are not in vain, however, as "religious freedom is central to ensuring that all members of the human family can more fully develop personally and spiritually," the archbishop said.

Some believers are denied even the most basic expression of faith, prayer within a community, and face "serious physical and legal repercussions for the pursuit of such a fundamental human need," he added.

The dramatic examples of Christians who are "imprisoned, murdered or forced to convert or deny their faith around the world," the archbishop explained, "is a crisis which continues to be ignored by the international community and requires the urgent attention of international and national leaders to protect the right to religious freedom of these individuals and communities."

Just two days before the archbishop delivered his remarks, an attack occurred on the Syrian Catholic community at Our Lady of Deliverance Catholic Church in Baghdad. "This is again

another tragic incident of the continued intolerance, discrimination and violence directed at Christians," he lamented.

"Our thoughts and prayers go to the victims of this attack and their families, some of whom I have known personally," Archbishop Chullikatt stated. "My delegation calls on the entire international community to work to ensure that all religions and all believers have the most basic right to religious freedom and worship."

--- --- ---

On the Net:

Full text: www.holyseemission.org/1Nov2010.html