

## **STATEMENT: CORAN BURNING IN SWEDEN**

### **An appeal for mutual respect and non-violence**

Strasbourg, 18th September 2023

It is with deep concern that we learn of the latest events in Sweden and Denmark. Pages of the Koran, the holy scripture of Muslims, were publicly burnt in front of Stockholm's largest mosque. This was a deliberate provocation for the Muslim community in Sweden, but also for Muslim men and women throughout Europe and beyond.

Freedom of expression is a fundamental human right. But when freedom of expression is used to destroy peaceful coexistence, this must not and cannot be accepted. Individual freedoms are never absolute, but are linked to duties and responsibilities towards others.

Burning a sacred document for a religious community is not only a profoundly disrespectful provocation of religious feelings, it is also an insult to all believers who, out of deep conviction, are committed to understanding and peace between religions. It is also the very negation of dialogue between beliefs.

This is why we stand alongside our Muslim sisters and brothers and express our profound opposition to this deliberate provocation.

Freedom of thought, conscience and religion anchored in Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights are the foundations of human dignity.

**The Interreligious and Interconvictional Dialogue Committee of the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe calls on believers of all religions, all women and men of goodwill, to continue together on the path of mutual respect and non-violence.**

