



GISC Deplores and Expresses Deep Concern over the Paris 2024 Olympics Opening Ceremony and Calls for Respect for Religion and Sacred Values

The **Global Imams and Scholars Council (GISC)** and its member organisations, representing Imams and Scholars councils from different countries and continents **deplore** and **express deep concerns** over the **opening ceremony of the Paris 2024 Olympics**. The event displayed a glaring disrespect for religions and people of faith and a serious offence to the Prophets and religious symbols, particularly our **Prophet Jesus (Peace be upon him) and his disciples**.

The actions observed during this ceremony signify an alarming moral decline and a blatant attack on **religious values** and **human principles**. They constitute a deep insult to the sentiments of all believers in God and His messengers, challenging their core convictions and beliefs. Furthermore, this offensive act violates the spirit of unity and understanding that sports, in particular the Olympics, are meant to promote.

We note the concern about the increasing erosion of moral values in this day and age, where religious and ethical principles are being discarded and challenged. A sense of the sacred and inviolable is common to all humans. We all - every culture and group without exception - have that which we hold '**sacred**': that which we cherish above all else and to which no dishonour can be tolerated. This may be, for example, a set of principles, a hallowed memory, or a symbol of identity. Each of these is held sacrosanct by that group, and their emotional connection to it is so strong that appeals to '**freedom to insult it**' will pale into insignificance.

Whether a symbol that represents all that one holds dear in terms of identity and belonging, or a figure who personifies everything that one cherishes about what it means to be truly human, a memory so profound (or traumatic) that it has shaped one's sense of self and purpose, or a principle that stands as the marker between a society worth living in or one that must be changed. Each of these symbols strikes at the core of a person's or group's dignity, self-worth, moral foundations or sense of self.



Though the devotion to this ideal may be inconceivable to others, it is necessary as part of a healthy and **mutually respectful society** that due heed is paid to what others truly value. It should also be noted that, whilst **freedom of speech** is a deeply cherished value in our society, we all understand the difference between preserving that right and making needless insults.

The **Global Imams and Scholars Council (GISC)** and its member organisations strongly deplore these trends that promote insult and mockery of religious icons and figures rather than unity and understanding. We call upon all sports organisations and international bodies to uphold their responsibilities in respecting religions and sacred values and to avoid actions that could incite strife and tension among people. Sports should be a channel for communication and intercultural understanding, not a platform for insult and degradation.

We also reaffirm the esteemed status of these **figures of faith**, particularly our **Prophet Jesus (Peace be upon him)**, whom we honour as a great prophet and messenger of Islam. His divine mission called for the worship of God. Promoting these values **fosters tolerance** and **mutual respect** among peoples, highlighting the unity and noble goals of humanity and faith.

Global Imams and Scholars Council (GISC)

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