



OIC/ACM-2019/SG.SP

ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION

STATEMENT OF

**H.E. DR. YOUSEF A. AL-OTHAIMEEN
SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC
COOPERATION**

AT

**THE ANNUAL COORDINATION MEETING OF THE OIC MINISTERS
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

New York, September 2019

**In the name of Allah
And prayers and peace be upon His Messenger**

**Highnesses,
Excellencies,**

Your Excellency Mrs. Rosemary DiCarlo, UN Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalamu alaikum wa-Rahmatullah wa-Barakatuh

It is my pleasure to address this Annual Coordination Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Ministers of Member States of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and I welcome H.E. Mrs. Rosemary DiCarlo, UN Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs.

Today's meeting is in continuation of our periodic meetings, which aim to further coordinate positions, especially on the issues on the agenda of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) at its current session, to defend our Ummah in accordance with the OIC Charter and in line with the general principles, which your august body, whose last meeting was in Abu Dhabi in March 2019, is committed to implement and the resolutions it adopted.

I also commend the efforts of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, with the orientations and generous patronage of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman Bin Abdulaziz, for hosting the Fourteenth Session of the Islamic Summit Conference in Makkah Al-Mukarramah in May 2019. I reiterate my profound gratitude and appreciation for the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the host country, for the generous support, assistance, and facilities it has been providing to the OIC to enable it to discharge its mandated functions.

I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to reiterate my sincere thanks and appreciation to the United Arab Emirates for its efforts to make the last CFM a success, culminating in the adoption of important resolutions and initiatives.

I thank H.E. UN Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs for her presence among us, which demonstrates our common interest in and joint consultation on many issues of concern to the Muslim world, which are also of interest to the international community. I therefore seize this opportunity to commend the OIC-UN fruitful cooperation, which would enhance the OIC contribution to serving the causes requiring consolidated efforts by all actors, be they States or regional or international organizations.

In the same vein, the OIC General Secretariat seeks to hold a series of bilateral consultations with regional organizations and non-Member States with active role in the international

community. This cooperation will enhance the OIC role in addressing the issues of common interest and bolster its position at the regional and international levels.

Highnesses,

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our meeting today coincides with the celebration of the 50th OIC Anniversary. It is thus an occasion to recall the goals and principles for which the OIC was founded. In line with your decision taken in your 46th meeting in Abu Dhabi, the commemoration of this occasion will be launched from the headquarters country, which provided the General Secretariat with generous financial support to celebrate the occasion. Our Organization has made many achievements over the past five decades, but today it has to adapt to the changes on the international arena and address the challenges facing the Muslim world; an endeavor that requires more cooperation and solidarity between Member States, pursuit of the reform process within the OIC, and progress in the implementation of the OIC-2025: Plan of Action.

At the forefront of these challenges are the scourges of terrorism and extremism, which continue to prey on security and stability in the region and the world, as evidenced by the recent terrorist operations in the region.

Saudi Arabia has recently witnessed a sinful terrorist attack on two Aramco plants targeting global energy supplies and the global economy. It is no secret that any prejudice to the security of Saudi Arabia, as a Member and Headquarters State, would prejudice the security and cohesion of the entire Muslim world and endanger the entire global economy. I take this opportunity to renew the OIC full solidarity with Saudi Arabia all measures taken to defend its security and stability in line with the OIC and UN Charters.

In the same context, this year's terrorist attacks on two New Zealand mosques and on a number of churches in Sri Lanka have highlighted the threat of violent extremism and its relation with terrorism. These events demonstrated that terrorism has no religion, nationality or race. It is thus necessary to intensify further cooperation with the international community to combat this plight and evolve a comprehensive approach that considers all its security, economic, cultural, social and intellectual dimensions. I would like to reaffirm the OIC continued endeavor to counter misperceptions about Islam through its initiatives to counter Islamophobia, promote tolerance and moderation, and foster dialogue among peoples of different cultures and religions through its Islamophobia Observatory and Sawt Al-Hikmah Center.

Highnesses,

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

The question of Palestine and Al-Quds Ash-Sharif, which is the OIC central cause, is facing increasing political, economic and humanitarian challenges. As you know, a few days ago, at its headquarters in Jeddah, the OIC held an extraordinary meeting at the level of the Council of Foreign Ministers at the request of Saudi Arabia, regarding the Prime Minister of the Israeli Occupation Government stated intention to annex territories in the Occupied West Bank. The meeting adopted a resolution dismissing such announcement and asserting taking all possible political and legal measures and steps to confront this colonial and expansionist policy.

The unilateral actions of Israel, the occupying Power, and its ongoing attempts to alter the historical, geographical and legal identity of Palestine and its violation of the legitimate Palestinian rights require us to demonstrate the spirit of solidarity and unify our position within the framework of joint Islamic action to support this just cause by voting in favor of draft UN resolutions with a view to establishing and defending the legitimate Palestinian rights, condemning and confronting the Israeli occupation policies, mobilizing the international community to assume its responsibility towards the establishment of justice, and providing international protection for the Palestinian people. In the same context, we renew our call on the international community to engage in sponsoring a multilateral political process, within a specified time frame, to end the Israeli occupation and establish an independent Palestinian State on the borders of June 4, 1967, with Al-Quds Ash-Sharif as its capital, pursuant to the agreed international references, including the relevant UN resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative.

I would also like to stress that serious developments related to the deterioration of the situation of Palestinian refugees, the targeting of the UNRWA and the accumulating deficit of its budget require us to coordinate our efforts and mobilize political support in the UNGA to renew the UNRWA political mandate. Furthermore, our Member States should provide more financial contributions as an essential political and humanitarian commitment to the issue of the Palestine refugees.

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

In addition to the question of Palestine, the issue of Jammu and Kashmir has recently witnessed serious developments because of India's unilateral decision on August 5, 2019 to rescind Article 370 of its Constitution, thus abolishing the special status of Jammu and Kashmir. Numerous violations of the human rights of the Kashmiri people ensued. In the light of the foregoing, we reaffirm the UN Security Council (UNSC) resolutions on the internationally-recognized status of Jammu and Kashmir, renew our solidarity with its people

and call for the resumption of the dialogue process between Pakistan and India. We also call on the UN to uphold its resolutions, including the right of self-determination of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

As for Yemen, we welcome and laud the donation of US\$ 500 million made by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan. We also appreciate Saudi Arabia's relentless efforts to hold dialogue among the parties concerned to address the situation in Aden and Abyan and preserve the unity of Yemen. Yet, these events highlight the need for prompt action to resume the peace process in order to reach a comprehensive settlement of the Yemeni crisis based on the three agreed terms of reference and UNSC resolution No. 2216. We reiterate our support for the UN efforts and the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for Yemen and reaffirm the importance of full implementation of the Stockholm Agreements.

We have recently followed with increasing alarm the escalation of violence and terrorist attacks in Afghanistan at a time the country is bracing for presidential elections. The OIC, which has been calling for a cessation of violence and for dedicated pursuit of dialogue and national reconciliation through an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned process, remains committed to continuing its efforts to contribute to reinforcing the foundations of peace, security, stability and development in Afghanistan.

With regard to Libya, we are deeply concerned over the security challenges and terrorist threats facing the country. The OIC is fully committed to the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Libya. Once again, we affirm that the political solution is the only way out of the Libyan crisis, in line with the agreed references.

With regard to Mali, the Sahel, Sierra Leone and the Central African Republic, the OIC affirms its commitment to continue efforts to contribute to the achievement of comprehensive peace, security, stability and reconstruction in these regions, with the support of the relevant Islamic financial institutions.

Concerning Somalia, pursuant to the resolution adopted by your august Council at its 46th session held in Abu Dhabi, the OIC organized the "International Conference on Intellectual Security and Combating Extremism" on April 29, 2019 in Mogadishu, in cooperation with the Federal Republic of Somalia. Last July, the OIC signed the agreement of the headquarters of its Regional Mission in Somalia in implementation of the resolutions of the Islamic Summit and the CFM.

As for Nagorno-Karabakh, the OIC reiterates its call on the international community to work towards ending Armenia's occupation of the province and resolving the conflict in line with relevant Security Council resolutions in order to preserve the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan and ensure inviolability of its internationally-recognized borders.

On another front, the OIC is following with great concern the situation of the Rohingya community in Myanmar and their continued suffering. The developments of this issue were discussed at length in all aspects during the intensive meetings held here in New York,

including in the meetings of the Contact Group and the Open-ended Group on Accountability for Human Rights Violations against the Rohingya. This was an occasion during which the participants stressed the need to intensify efforts in cooperation with the UN organs to put an end to the tragedy of the Rohingya and defend their fundamental rights.

The OIC is also keen on monitoring the situation of Muslim groups in the Philippines, Thailand, Sri Lanka and other countries and endeavors to pursue dialogue and consultation with the governments of those countries in order to further improve the situation of Muslims and ensure the exercise of their rights.

Your Highnesses,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Despite the crises in some Member States, we note with satisfaction the success scored by several others. On August 17, the Sudanese people made a historic achievement by signing the Constitutional Declaration on the Transition Arrangements, followed by the formation of a new government. The OIC, represented by its Secretary-General in the signing of the Constitutional Declaration among other international witnesses, stands by the Sudan at this delicate stage with a view to realize the people's aspirations for security, peace, stability and development.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate our thanks to the State of Niger, which will host the next session of your august Council, next year, *insha'a Lab*, in Niamey. I reaffirm the General Secretariat's readiness to coordinate fully with Niger in order to contribute to the success of the session.

Thank you all.