

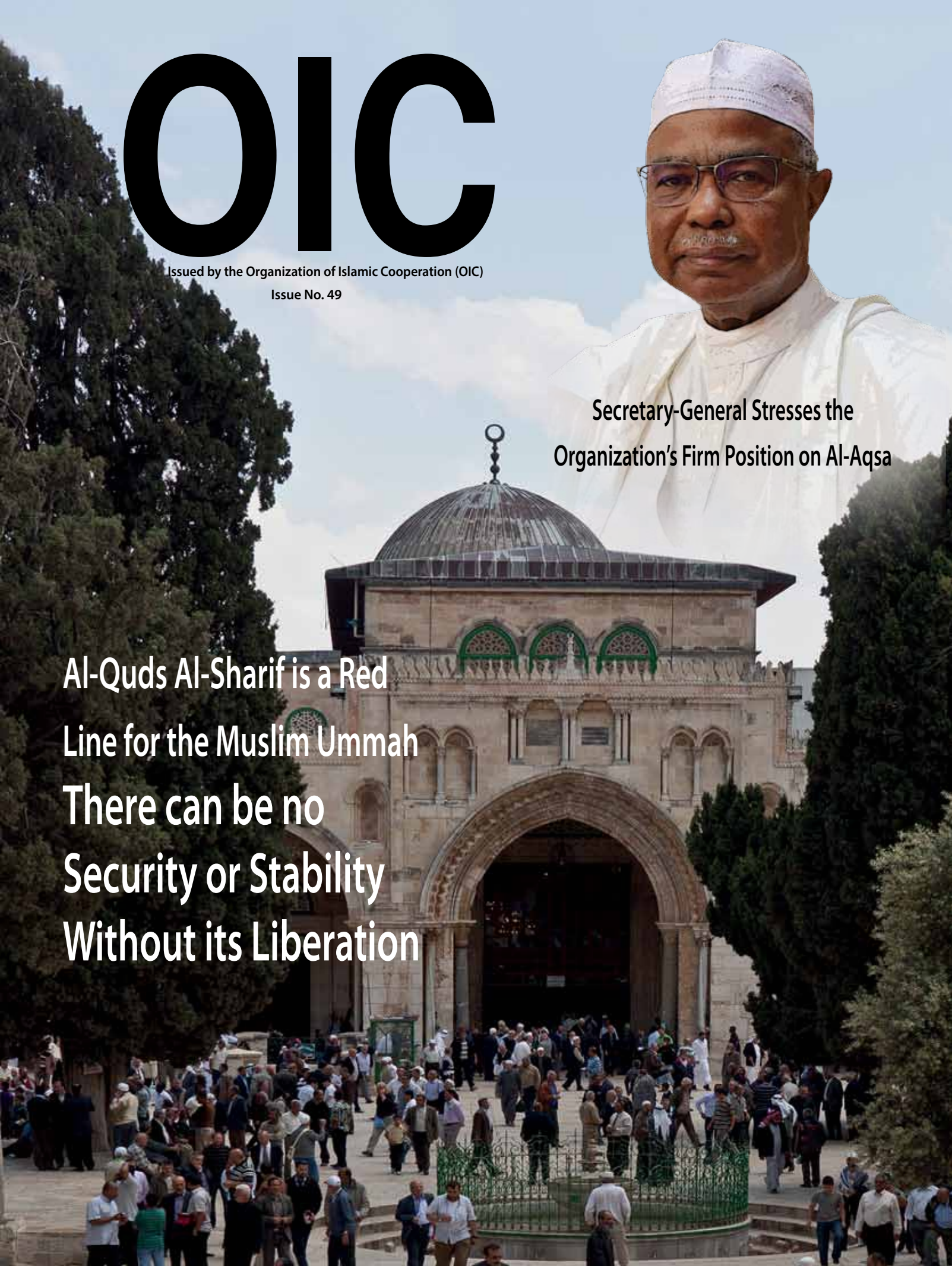
OIC

Issued by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

Issue No. 49

Secretary-General Stresses the
Organization's Firm Position on Al-Aqsa

Al-Quds Al-Sharif is a Red
Line for the Muslim Ummah
There can be no
Security or Stability
Without its Liberation



About OIC

The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is the second largest inter-governmental organization after the United Nations with a membership of 57 states spread over four continents. The Organization is the collective voice of the Muslim world. It endeavors to safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony among various people of the world.

The Organization was established upon a decision of the historical summit which took place in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco on 12th Rajab 1389 Hijra (25 September 1969) following the criminal arson of Al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied Jerusalem. In 1970 the first ever meeting of Islamic Conference of Foreign Minister (ICFM) was held in Jeddah which decided to establish a permanent secretariat in Jeddah headed by the organization's secretary general. H.E. Hissein Brahim Taha is the 12th Secretary General of the Organization. He assumed the position in November 2021.

The first OIC Charter was adopted by the 3rd ICFM Session held in 1972. The Charter laid down the objectives and principles of the organization and fundamental purposes to strengthen the solidarity and cooperation among the Member States. Over the last 40 years, the membership has grown from its founding members of 30 to 57 states. The Charter was amended to keep pace with the developments that have unraveled across the world. The present Charter of the OIC was adopted by the Eleventh Islamic Summit held in Dakar on 13-14 March 2008 to become the pillar of the OIC future Islamic action in line with the requirements of the 21st century.

The Organization has the singular honor to galvanize the Ummah into a unified body and have actively represented the Muslims by espousing all causes close to the hearts of over 1.5 billion Muslims of the world. The Organization has consultative and cooperative relations with the UN and other inter-governmental organizations to protect the vital interests of the Muslims and to work for the settlement of conflicts and disputes involving Member States. In safeguarding the true values of Islam and the Muslims, the organization has taken various steps to remove misperceptions and have strongly advocated elimination of discrimination against the Muslims in all forms and manifestations.

The Member States of the OIC face many challenges in the 21st century and to address those challenges, the third extraordinary session of the Islamic Summit held in Makkah in December 2005, laid down the blue print called the Ten-Year Program of Action. It has successfully concluded with the close of 2015. A successor programme for the next decade (2016-2025) has been adopted.

The new programme OIC-2025 is anchored in the provisions of the OIC Charter and focuses on 18 priority areas with 107 goals. The priority areas include issues of Peace and Security, Palestine and Al-Quds, Poverty Alleviation, Counter-terrorism, Investment and Finance, Food Security, Science and Technology, Climate Change and Sustainability, Moderation, Culture and Interfaith Harmony, Empowerment of Women, Joint Islamic Humanitarian Action, Human Rights and Good Governance, among others.

Among the OIC's key bodies: the Islamic Summit, the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM), the General Secretariat, in addition to the Al-Quds Committee and three permanent committees concerned with science and technology, economy and trade, and information and culture. There are also specialized organs under the banner of the OIC including the Islamic Development Bank and the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, as well as subsidiary and affiliate organs that play a vital role in boosting cooperation in various fields among the OIC member states.

For more details, visit the OIC website at
www.oic-oci.org



نظام التعاون الإسلامي
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OUR MESSAGE

Half Year of Work

With the publication of the forty-ninth issue of the Organization's Journal, I will have actually spent half a year in my position as Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. In the past six months, the Organization has witnessed unparalleled activities. One of its most prominent milestones has been the 48th session of the Council of Foreign Ministers, which was held in the capital of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Islamabad, on 22-23 March 2022. It's the second session that was held offline after the Niamey session in the Republic of Niger, which was held in the time of COVID-19 pandemic. The period that witnessed the holding of many conferences and meetings virtually, due to precautionary restrictions.

However, the 48th session, which was held under the title: (Partnering for Unity, Justice and Development) mobilized the joint Islamic action, and helped the Organization resume its performance in the political, economic, cultural, humanitarian and scientific fields, etc. We can say that momentum has returned to the activities of the Organization, after the world's ability to communicate was affected by the precautionary measures taken against COVID-19.

In this regard, I can only thank the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for its support for holding this great event, as well as all OIC Member States for their continued financial and moral support.

This session constituted a real beginning of the work of the new administration in the OIC General Secretariat, as it laid down a road map for the coming months until the convening of the 49th session of the CFM, which will be held in Nouakchott, the capital of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania.

We started working in the Organization on a number of pillars. The actual start of the activity of the regional mission in Niger for the Sahel and Lake Chad basin last December, was the beginning of the expansion of the Organization's activity in a dear part of the African region, a part that is in dire need of optimal humanitarian action, which we hope will contribute to containing the humanitarian crises there, alleviating the suffering of the refugees in Lake Chad, as well as strengthening development with the support of the OIC Member States.

I was keen to make the desired work integrated, which prompted my African tour to Chad, Niger, Cameroon and Senegal, at the beginning of last March. It was a fruitful visit, during which I was briefed on the visions of the leaders of those countries and their interest in the joint Islamic action and its promotion in this important part of the Islamic world.

The third step was the appointment of H.E. Mr. Nassirou Bako-Arifari, who held the position of Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Benin, as my Special Envoy for Africa. Mr. Arifari toured a number of African countries immediately upon his selection at the 48th session of the Council of Foreign Ministers, as part of an introductory visit, during which he was briefed on the most prominent issues and concerns that preoccupied the leaders of this country as part of the Organization's endeavor to understand the requirements of work in those regions.

With regard to the Asian region in the Islamic world, the Organization has taken firm steps to contain the humanitarian crisis in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan through the efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, Ambassador Tarig Ali Bakheet, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian, Cultural and Social Affairs in the General Secretariat. The signing of the establishing charter of the Humanitarian Trust Fund for Afghanistan, at the headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan in Islamabad, was a watershed that gave impetus to the activity of the Special Envoy and to the Organization's office in Kabul, in implementation of the resolutions of the Extraordinary Council of Foreign Ministers, held last December at the generous invitation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and hosted by Islamabad, to contain the repercussions of the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan.

The General Secretariat has carried out many activities and made great efforts, perhaps the most prominent of which is the work done for the Muslim community in Myanmar, and the adoption by the United Nations of the fifteenth of March of each year as the International Day to Combat Islamophobia. The countries and authorities that made this effort and contributed to this resolution seeing the light deserve thanks and appreciation.

In conclusion, I reiterate the Organization's steadfast support for the Palestinian cause, Al-Quds Al-Sharif and Masjid Al-Aqsa, the first Qibla, and the third holy mosque, considering that it has the priority on its agenda. The OIC will remain an edifice established in response to the pain of Al-Aqsa and the rise of the entire Ummah to rescue it. It will always strive to mobilize Muslims in order to reach consensus to establish an independent and sovereign state of Palestine with East Al-Quds as its capital, in accordance with the United Nations resolutions, stressing that the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque is an inviolable red line.



Hissein Brahim Taha

Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation

I was keen to make the desired work integrated, which prompted my African tour to Chad, Niger, Cameroon and Senegal, at the beginning of last March. It was a fruitful visit, during which I was briefed on the visions of the leaders of those countries and their interest in the joint Islamic action and its promotion in this important part of the Islamic world.

Issued by
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Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO), www.icesco.org
Union of News Agencies of the OIC Member States (UNA), Jeddah, www.una-oic.org
Islamic Broadcasting Union (IBU), Jeddah, www.ibuj.org
Islamic Committee of the International Crescent (ICIC), Benghazi, www.icic-oic.org
Islamic Organization for Food Security (IOFS), Nur-Sultan
Women Development Organization (WDO) in OIC Member States, Cairo
The OIC Labor Center, Baku
OIC Center for Police Cooperation and Coordination, Istanbul
The Science, Technology and Innovation Organization (COMSTECH General Secretariat), Islamabad

Affiliated Organs

Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (ICCIA), Karachi, www.iccia.com
Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC), Istanbul
International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Kuala Lumpur
The Islamic Solidarity Sports Federation (ISSF), Riyadh
Islamic Cooperation Youth Forum (ICYF), Istanbul
General Council for Islamic Banks and Financial Institutions (CIBAFI), Manama
Islamic World Academy of Sciences (IAS), Amman
Organization of Islamic Capitals and Cities (OICC), Makkah Al-Mukarramah
Global Forum for Moderation, Amman
The International Union of Muslim Scouts, Jeddah,
OIC Computer Emergency Response Team (OIC-CERT), Malaysia
Association of Tax Authorities of Islamic Countries (ATAIC), Khartoum
World Federation of Arabo-Islamic International Schools (WFAIIS), Cairo
Federation of Contractors from Islamic Countries (FOCIC), Casablanca
Federation of Consultants from Islamic Countries (FCIC), Istanbul
Real Estate Union in Islamic States (REUOS), Djibouti
Organization of the Islamic Ship-owners Association (OISA), Jeddah
OIC Media Forum, Turkey
Organisation of Islamic Cooperation Broadcasting Regulatory Authorities Forum (IBRAF), Turkey



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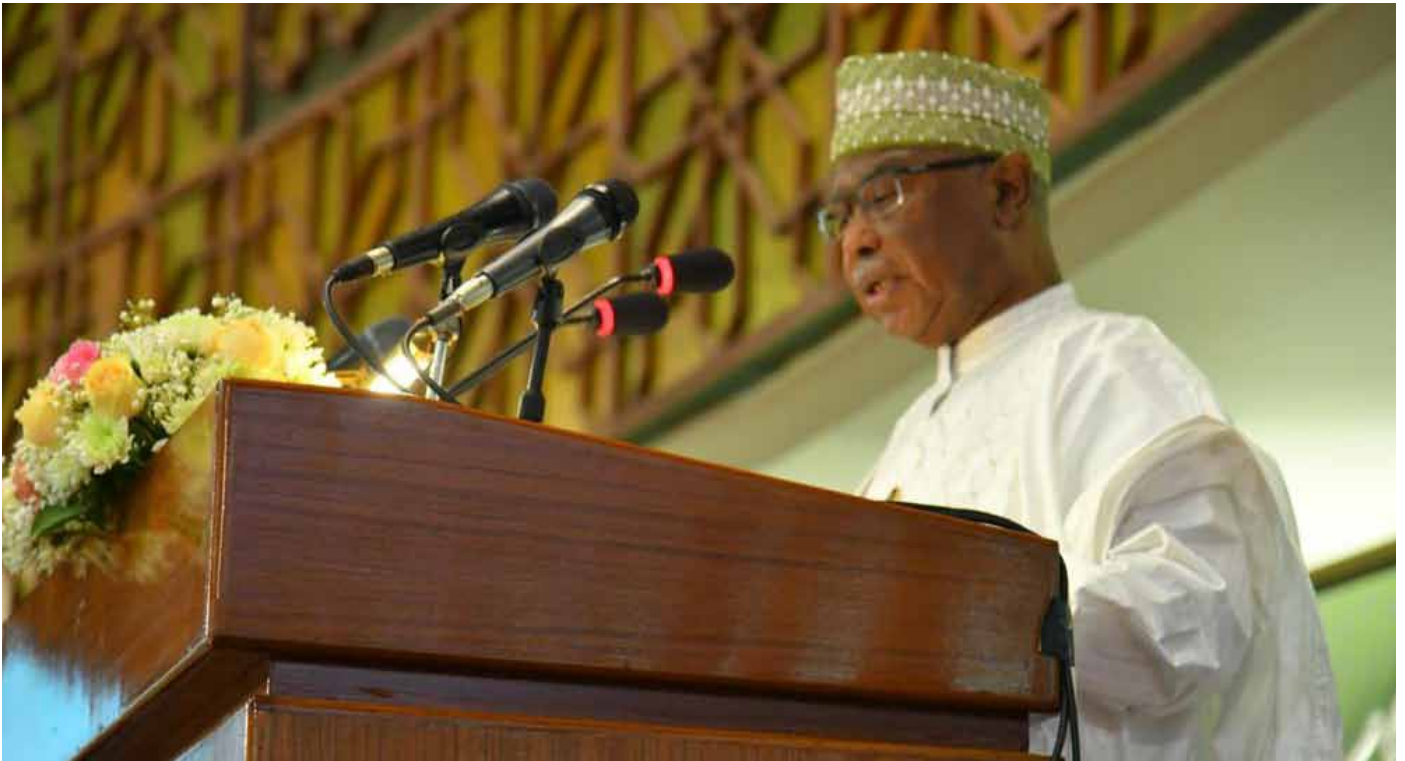
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OIC Foreign Ministers Affirm the Centrality of the Palestinian Cause

The meeting of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers in Islamabad affirmed the centrality of the Palestinian cause and Al-Quds Al-Sharif to the Islamic Ummah. It also asserted the principled and continuous support for the Palestinian people at all levels to restore their inalienable and legitimate rights, including their right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on the 1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. The 48th session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers also underlined the need to protect the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes, in accordance with United Nations General Assembly Resolution No. 194 and to address categorically any denial of these rights.

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan hosted the 48th session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers, in its capital, Islamabad, on 22-23 March 2022, on the theme of "Partnering for Unity, Justice and Development." The opening session was attended by the OIC Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Houssein Brahimi Taha. Republic of Niger, Chairman of

the previous session of the Council of Foreign Ministers, handed over the chairpersonship to Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Pakistan addressed the meeting, stressing the importance of declaring the 15th of March of every year a world day to combat the phenomenon of Islamophobia. Furthermore, he attributed this achievement to the actions taken by the Member States of the Organization, pointing out that Western countries have been suffering because of the perpetration of a terrorist act by an extremist individual. In the same vein, he stressed that there are extremists as well as ordinary people in any society.

For his part, the OIC Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Houssein Brahimi Taha, expressed his thanks and gratitude to the government and people of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for the coordination and cooperation in preparing the session. He also expressed his pleasure that the session coincided with the Pakistani celebrations of the 75th anniversary of Pakistan's independence, extending his warm congratulations on this occasion. He also thanked

the Republic of Niger for its efforts during its chairpersonship of the previous ministerial session, and his gratitude as well to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as the host country and Chair of the 14th session of the Islamic Summit, for its continuous support to the activities of the Organization.

Furthermore, H.E. Mr. Houssein Brahimi Taha, said that the continuation of the Israeli crimes and aggressions against the Palestinian people, their land and their holy sites, requires the strengthening of the spirit of solidarity and joint Islamic action. Relatedly, he added that Jammu and Kashmir issue is another long-standing just cause that concerns the Organization deeply.

Also, His Highness Prince Faisal bin Farhan bin Abdullah, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, addressed the 48th session of the Council, where he called on the international community and Member States to pressure the Houthis to stop their threat to international navigation, stressing that the escalation of the Houthis threatens the security and stability of the region.



The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, H.E. Mr. Mukhtar Tileuberdi, delivered the speech of the Asian Group, while the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tunisia, H.E. Mr. Othman Jerandi, gave the speech of the Arab Group, and the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Nigeria, H.E. Mr. Zubairu Dada, delivered the speech of the African Group, in addition to H.E. Mr. Wang Yi, State Counselor and Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China, who gave an address as a special guest. The participants also watched a video message by H.E. Mr. Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations.

The CFM affirmed adherence to the eternal principles of Islam, including the principles of peace, tolerance, unity, harmony and justice. Again, with regard to Al-Quds Al-Sharif, the Declaration said that it represents an integral part of the occupied territories of the Palestinian state, calling on the international community to compel Israel to refrain from all colonial practices and to abide by all international resolutions regarding the city of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and to refrain from all measures, practices and decisions aimed at changing the character and legal status of the Holy City, through the intensification of Jewish settlement activities in it and the forced deportation of its Palestinian Arab

residents, and to halt the desecration of Islamic sanctities, including the attacks on Al-Quds Al-Sharif.

The communique of the meeting also renewed its firm solidarity with the people of Jammu and Kashmir, and its full support for their inalienable right to self-determination in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and the Organization in a way that fulfills the aspirations of the Kashmiri people. It also condemned the grave violations against their human rights in the territory under illegal Indian occupation.

The meeting also renewed its rejection of the illegal and unilateral measures taken by India since 5 August 2019, underlining that the final settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with Security Council resolutions is indispensable for achieving lasting peace in the South Asia region. The Declaration also recognized Pakistan's pivotal role as a pillar of stability in South Asia.

Likewise, the session affirmed its solidarity with Mali, Afghanistan, Somalia, Sudan, Côte d'Ivoire, the Comoros, Djibouti, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the people of Jammu and Kashmir and the Turkish Cypriots, and expressed its support for their aspirations to live in peace, security and prosperity.

The CFM also welcomed the end of the

armed conflict between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia, emphasizing full solidarity with the government and people of Azerbaijan in their efforts to rehabilitate and rebuild the liberated lands that were badly affected by the Armenian aggression, in order to enable the displaced to return in safety and dignity as soon as possible.

Furthermore, the CFM condemned the terrorist attacks and offensives against the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, and welcomed the adoption by the UN Security Council of Resolution No. 2624. Likewise, it expressed solidarity with the Yemeni people. The Declaration stressed the need to accelerate the achievement of stability in the Middle East and North Africa through a peaceful solution to crises, in accordance with the principles of the Organization, the Charter of the United Nations and globally recognized international standards, stressing the firm support of the OIC to the countries of the Sahel region affected by the climate crisis, poor agricultural yields, terrorism, internal displacement, and political uncertainty.

In the same line, it stressed the need to alleviate the situation, as soon as possible, in North Africa as well as other regions of the African continent.

Islamabad's CFM Discusses Various Issues in the Muslim World



The 48th session of the Council of Foreign Ministers, held in Islamabad, expressed deep concern at the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation arising from the conflict in Ukraine. It also reaffirmed unequivocal support for the universal and consistent application of the principles of the UN Charter, including non-use of force, respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states, non-interference in their internal affairs, and peaceful settlement of disputes, to preserve and build international peace and security, to ensure equal security for all States and respect for International Humanitarian Law. The communique underlined that the Member States had deliberated on the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine at the 48th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers, and called for an immediate cessation of hostilities to prevent further loss of lives and ensure that the humanitarian crisis does not worsen in Ukraine. In the same vein, it stressed the need for the establishment of humanitarian corridors to ensure safe movement of civilians from active conflict zones and the provision of humanitarian supplies. It also urged both sides to engage in meaningful dialogue with the purpose of finding

a solution to the present conflict. Similarly, it reaffirmed the long-lasting support of the Member States to preserve unity, territorial integrity, sovereignty and international recognition of Bosnia and Herzegovina, within its internationally recognized borders, as a fully functional and self-sustainable state capable of carrying out its powers and fulfilling its international obligations, as well as its multiethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious structure. In the same vein, it deplored the overall policy and steps taken towards the illegal transfer of competencies from the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Republika Srpska, an entity in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as non-compliance with the decisions of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which annuls twenty-six years of reform and peacebuilding, and seriously threatens peace and security not only in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but in the entire Western Balkans region. The meeting underscored strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan. It also affirmed abiding solidarity with the people of Afghanistan and

expressed the confidence that the resilient Afghan people will continue to steer their country on the path to progress and prosperity.

The CFM strongly condemned the atrocities perpetrated against the Rohingya Muslim community in Myanmar and called for urgent action to uphold their basic rights, end their targeting and stigmatization and for the Government of Myanmar to allow and facilitate the return, in safety, security and dignity, of all the homeless and displaced Rohingya people.

The session expressed deep concern over the rising trend of Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hatred and strongly condemned all attempts to denigrate the sanctity of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and Islamic Symbols, to inflame sentiments of Muslims across the world, and to foment inter-cultural divisions and tensions. It also called upon the international community to prevent incitement to hatred and discrimination against Muslims and take effective measures to combat defamation of religions and acts of negative stereotyping and stigmatization of people based on religion, belief or ethnicity.

First Ministerial Meeting of Anti-Corruption Agencies



The CFM in Islamabad requested the OIC Secretary-General, in consultation with the OIC Contact Group on Peace and Dialogue and the Council of Foreign Ministers' Chair, to initiate, as a matter of priority, regular inter-civilizational dialogues on the sidelines of Annual Coordination Meeting (ACM) and the UN General Assembly sessions.

Furthermore, it requested the OIC Secretary-General and the Council of Foreign Ministers Chair to engage the managements of social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, in order for them to take institutional and technical measures to filter and remove any content that incites to violence and hatred against persons and communities based on their religion, belief or ethnicity. It also called upon the Member States and the OIC Secretary-General to promote the Islamophobia Observatory, by allocating human as well as financial resources necessary for its effective functioning.

The meeting rejected terrorism in all forms and manifestations as well as attempts to attribute terrorism to any country, religion, nationality, race or civilization. It also expressed the Member States' resolve to work

together to prevent and suppress terrorist acts through increased international solidarity and cooperation. In the same vein, it affirmed OIC's strong position against any attempts to equate the just and legitimate struggle of peoples for self-determination and liberation from foreign occupation with terrorism.

The meeting expressed its deep concern about the immense human suffering the COVID-19 Pandemic has caused across the globe. In the same connection, Member States committed to taking urgent and effective multilateral actions to provide necessary financial space to the developing countries by addressing their urgent liquidity and fiscal challenges as well as by addressing systemic impediments to the achievement of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Council welcomed the initiative by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to hold the first Ministerial Meeting of law enforcement agencies specialized in combating corruption in Member States in 2022, under the OIC Umbrella. It also welcomed the final report of the UN High Level Panel on Interna-

tional Financial Accountability, Transparency and Integrity (FACTI) and its recommendations.

The Member States committed to advance scientific and technological cooperation by harnessing the human and material resources, creating new Islamic institutions for higher education throughout the Islamic World and by sharing experience, expertise, research and good practices.

The CFM underlined the leading role of the Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH) in supporting the efforts of the Member States in the development of science, technology and innovation; and promotion of research and joint programmes. In the same connection, it called upon the Member States to proactively implement the resolutions of the Second OIC Summit on Science and Technology, hosted by the United Arab Emirates. The meeting emphasized the importance of intensifying intra-OIC economic cooperation through the OIC Standing Committee on Economic and Commercial Cooperation (COMCEC) and the Islamic Development Bank.

Meetings on the Sidelines of Islamabad CFM



OIC Secretary-General Meets the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tunisia

The Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tunisia, Mr. Othman Jerandi, in the office of the Secretary-General at the venue of the CFM 48th session, in Islamabad.

The two sides examined bilateral relations between the OIC and Tunisia and ways for their promotion. They also touched upon matters of mutual interest.



Secretary-General Meets the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and Chadians Abroad

The Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, met in Islamabad with Mr. Omar Bin Daoud, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, African Integration and Chadians Abroad, on the sidelines of the 48th session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers.

The two sides discussed cooperation relations between the OIC and the Republic of Chad and ways to enhance them.



Secretary-General Meets the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Nigeria

The Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, met the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, H.E. Mr. Zubairu Dada, in the office of H.E. the OIC Secretary-General, on the sidelines of the 48th session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers, in Islamabad, capital of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.



Secretary-General Meets the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kyrgyzstan

H.E. Hissein Brahim Taha, the Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), received the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kyrgyzstan, H.E. Ruslan Kazakbayev, in his office at the venue of OIC's 48th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM), in Islamabad, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, on the sidelines of the CFM's 48th session.

The Minister expressed his country's support for the OIC.

Meetings on the Sidelines of Islamabad CFM



Secretary-General Meets the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Palestine

The Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, met the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Palestine, H.E. Dr. Riyad Al-Malki, at the office of OIC Secretary-General, on the sidelines of the 48th session, in Islamabad.

Dr. Al-Malki briefed the Secretary-General on the latest developments in the Palestinian territories, particularly, the practices and violations of the Israeli occupation authorities. The two sides discussed a number of issues of common interest.



Secretary-General Meets the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Guinea

The Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Hissein Brahim Taha, received Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation, African Integration, H.E. Mr. Morissanda Kouyaté, in his office, on the sidelines of the 48th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers in Islamabad, capital of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

H.E. Mr. Kouyaté briefed the Secretary-General on the latest developments in the political situation in Guinea.



Secretary-General Discusses Bilateral Cooperation with the Gambian Minister

The Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, met the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Gambia, H.E. Mr. Mamadou Tangara, on the eve of the 48th session of OIC Council of Foreign Ministers, in Islamabad, Pakistan.

The meeting discussed ways to strengthen relations between the OIC and the Republic of The Gambia, as well as the ongoing arrangements for the upcoming ordinary Islamic Summit.



OIC Secretary-General Meets the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand

The Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, met the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand, H.E. Mr. Don Pramudwinai, in the office of H.E. the Secretary General at the venue of the 48th session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers, in Islamabad, on the sidelines of the said session.

The two sides examined bilateral relations as well as issues of common interest.

Bilateral on the Sidelines of Islamabad CFM



Secretary-General Meets the Yemeni Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs

The Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Political Affairs in Yemen, H.E. Mr. Mansour Bagash, in his office, on the sidelines of the 48th Session of OIC Council of Foreign Ministers, in Islamabad.



OIC Secretary-General Meets with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Somalia

The Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received, in Islamabad, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Federal Republic of Somalia, H.E. Mr. Abdisaid Muse Ali, on the sidelines of the 48th session of the OIC Council Foreign Ministers.



Secretary-General Discusses Bilateral Cooperation with the US Under Secretary of State

The Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, met with Mrs. Uzra Zeya, the US Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights, at his residence in the Pakistani capital, Islamabad, on the eve of the 48th session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers.

The meeting discussed the bilateral relations between the Organization and the United States, in addition to issues of common interest, on top of which the situation in Afghanistan, the Sahel region and Lake Chad.



OIC Secretary-General Holds Talks with the State Councilor and Foreign Minister of China

The Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, met with the State Councilor and Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China, Mr. Wang Yi, on the sidelines of the 48th session of OIC Council of Foreign Ministers, in the capital of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Islamabad.

During this meeting, the two sides valued the long-standing and deep-rooted historical relations between China and the Muslim world. They also reviewed the full range of relations between the OIC and China and its future prospects.



At Signing Ceremony of Legal Charter:

Hissein Taha Appeals to Everyone to Support the Afghanistan Fund

The Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, appealed to all Member States, as well as relevant stakeholders and partners, to support the Humanitarian Trust Fund for Afghanistan. The appeal was made during the signing ceremony of the Legal Charter of the Humanitarian Trust Fund for Afghanistan, which took place at the Foreign Ministry of Pakistan, in Islamabad, on the eve of the Council of Foreign Ministers 48th session.

The Secretary-General of the OIC, on behalf of the Organization, and H.E. Dr. Muhammad Sulaiman Al Jasser, President of the Islamic Development (IsDB) Group, co-signed the Legal Charter.

The signing ceremony signaled the coming into effect of the Fund, which will provide humanitarian aid to the Afghan people and contribute to the development in Afghanistan.

In his speech, the OIC Secretary-General commended the efforts of the IsDB Group's president and personnel to speed up the launch of the Fund.

For his part, the IsDB Group's President stressed the importance of the Fund in sup-

porting the Afghan people, underlining the Bank's commitment to that end. He also appealed to the Member States and international partners to contribute to the Fund and support its work.

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In the same vein, The OIC Special Envoy for Afghanistan, Amb. Tarig Ali Bakheet and H.E. Uzra Zeya, the US Undersecretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy and Human Rights held a consultation meeting on the sidelines of the 48th session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers.

The two sides exchanged views on ways and means to strengthen the bilateral co-

operation between the OIC and the US as well as the latest developments unfolding in Afghanistan. They also stressed the need to strengthen their efforts to address the daunting humanitarian and development challenges facing Afghanistan.

On the other hand, the delegation of the People's Republic of Bangladesh handed over the instrument of ratification of the Statute of the Women Development Organization in the OIC Member States, in a ceremony held on the sidelines of the 48th session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers, in Islamabad - Islamic Republic of Pakistan, on 23 March 2022.

It is noteworthy that the Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, had called on the OIC Member States that had not yet ratified the Statute of the Women Development Organization to expedite the completion of the ratification procedures to join the membership of that specialized and promising Organization and benefit from all its programmes aimed to enhance the capacities of women and empower them in all fields as an equal partner to men, for the progress and prosperity of the Islamic Ummah.



Islamabad CFM Part of OIC's Efforts to follow up on the Situation in Afghanistan

The 48th session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers, which took place on the 22nd of last March, in Islamabad, was the second most prominent activity of the Organization after the emergency meeting of Foreign Ministers, held last December, on the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. The Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, H.E. Mr. Houssein Brahim Taha, appealed to all OIC Member States, the relevant stakeholders, as well as the partners of the Organization, to support the Humanitarian Trust Fund for Afghanistan, during the signing ceremony of the Legal Charter of the Fund, which took place at the headquarters of the Pakistani Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in Islamabad, on the eve of the 48th session of the Council of Foreign Ministers, in the Pakistani capital.

Since August, Afghanistan has been witnessing a difficult humanitarian situation, characterized by uncertainty about the future of Afghanistan; which prompted the Organization to take several steps towards containing the situation and fulfilling its role as a bridge, delivering the support of the international community to the Afghan people, especially due to the specialty of the Organization that puts it before its responsibilities in addressing the issues of the Islamic world.

H.E. the Secretary-General affirmed, throughout the Afghan conflict, the full commitment to support a peace process

led by the Afghan people, recalling at the same time the resolutions by the meetings of the Islamic Summit and the Council of Foreign Ministers, regarding the situation in the country, as well as Makkah Declaration issued in July 2011, at the end of the International Ulema Conference on Peace and Security in Afghanistan.

Taha appealed to all OIC Member States, the relevant stakeholders, as well as the partners of the Organization, to support the Humanitarian Trust Fund for Afghanistan,

Following the developments in Afghanistan in August 2021, the OIC Foreign Ministers held an extraordinary session in Islamabad on 19 December, on the humanitarian situation there. The Ministers decided that the Organization would play a leading role in the delivery of humanitarian and development aid to the people of Afghanistan.

Following the decision of the extraordinary

meeting to appoint Ambassador Tarig Ali Bakheet, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian, Cultural and Social Affairs, in the General Secretariat of the Organization, as a Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to Afghanistan, Ambassador Tarig made several visits to Member States and contacted international partners, in order to coordinate aid and assistance efforts in the desirable manner. He also visited Afghanistan to follow up on the economic and political participation with Afghanistan.

The meeting also decided to launch a food security program in Afghanistan. In this context, it requested the Islamic Organization for Food Security to carry out the necessary action by establishing a food security reserve system. It also urged international donors, UN funds and programmes and other international actors to contribute generously to the food security programme.

The Secretary-General is in contact with the International Islamic Fiqh Academy to arrange a visit by a delegation to be led by prominent religious scholars, jurists and other religious institutions to engage with Afghanistan on issues of tolerance, moderation, equal access to education and women's rights in Islam.

The Foreign Ministers called on Afghanistan to take concrete steps against terrorist organizations and groups, including Al-Qaeda and Daesh and their affiliated groups.



African Files on the Table of Islamabad's Session

Appointment of Nassirou Bako-Arifari as Special Envoy of Secretary-General for Africa

The Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, which was held in Islamabad, adopted a resolution appointing H.E. Dr. Nassirou Bako-Arifari as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Africa.

Dr. Bako had held the position of Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Republic of Benin. He also worked as a university professor, lecturer in political sociology and researcher, in addition to his work in many national, regional and international universities.

This decision is driven by the Council's belief in the importance of the African continent and its issues – the more so as a large number of OIC Member States are from the African continent. The decision is also in response to the Makkah Al-Mukarramah Summit's urge for greater attention to be given by the OIC to the issues of the African continent.

The files of the African Member States occupied an important place in the activities of the 48th session of the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM). The issues included several political, scientific as well as other aspects. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) carried out many programmes, activities, and projects in the African Member

States. Perhaps the signing of the headquarters agreement for the OIC's regional mission in Niamey, Niger, was the most prominent in the current period. The mission is expected to constitute a starting point for strengthening the OIC's role in the Sahel and Lake Chad region. It also mobilizes political commitment and carries out development and humanitarian activities.

On the humanitarian level, the OIC's General Secretariat signed, in December 2021, the Headquarters Agreement with the Government of the Republic of Niger, whereby the mission coordinates with the specialized Nigerien authorities to implement a humanitarian project related to the vocational training of military personnel's widows and orphans in Niamey, in addition to carrying out microfinance projects in some Sahel countries (G5), in order to promote women's entrepreneurship, in addition to working currently to rehabilitate several schools in the country.

The issue of the African Sahel region has taken prominence on the OIC's agenda, and within the framework of its efforts to support the countries of the Sahel region, the OIC, through its specialized institutions, such as the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB)

and the Islamic Solidarity Fund (ISF), seeks permanent communication with the Member States in the Sahel region to help finance the development projects agreed upon. The countries in the region benefited from the IsDB's US\$2.3 billion Strategic Preparedness and Response Program to support the Member States' efforts in preventing the COVID-19 pandemic.

To give a new impetus to the OIC's role in Africa, the Sahel region, and Lake Chad, the OIC Secretary-General visited the Republics of Chad, Cameroon, Niger, and Senegal, in the beginning of March. He discussed with the leaders of these countries the situation in the region and ways to strengthen the OIC's role in helping these countries to confront security and development challenges. A high-level delegation also visited Abuja (Federal Republic of Nigeria). It held talks with the Chair of the Commission of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on developments and ways of cooperation.

It is noteworthy that the OIC intends to hold meetings with the African Union Commission and other regional organizations in Africa.



OIC Established Special System for Security and Peace

Jammu and Kashmir, Rohingya and Islamophobia

in Side-Meetings

The OIC Contact Group on Jammu and Kashmir convened on the sidelines of the 48th session of the Council of Foreign Ministers, in the Pakistani capital of Islamabad. Addressing the meeting, the Secretary-General, Mr Hissein Brahim Taha, affirmed that the conflict of Jammu and Kashmir continues without any signs of solution, noting that the OIC has constantly reiterated, in its resolutions, its strong and firm support for the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

He further said that the support of the Organization is an expression of the full solidarity of the Muslim world with the people of Kashmir in its struggle for self-determination. In the same connection, the Secretary-General underlined that the situation in Jammu and Kashmir continues to be tense and raises a myriad of serious concerns.

He said that, in his capacity as Secretary-General, he wishes to build on the previous

sincere efforts on this important matter, emphasizing that the General Secretariat will spare no effort in raising its voice in solidarity with the people of Jammu and Kashmir, and stressing the importance of dialogue to achieve a peaceful solution to the long-standing conflict.

He further gave credit to the painstaking work carried out by its Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC) through its continuous monitoring of the violations of human rights in the occupied Kashmir and presenting reports to international human rights institutions. He also renewed the call of the OIC for the international community to continue its endeavors to assist the people of Jammu and Kashmir. On another note, the OIC Secretary-General, Mr Hissein Brahim Taha, said that the phenomenon of Islamophobia in Europe should be addressed through an integrated

approach that determines the nature of, documents and deconstructs Islamophobic discourse, toward the development of a new positive and realistic discourse with Muslims away from Islamophobia.

Ambassador Mohamed Salah Takiya, Director General for Political Affairs of the OIC General Secretariat, addressed the Contact Group open-ended Meeting on Muslims Living in Europe, on behalf of the Secretary-General. The meeting took place, on the sidelines of the 48th session of the OIC Council of the Foreign Ministers, held in Islamabad, capital of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, on 22-23 March 2022.

The Secretary-General said that the OIC is concerned over the growing trend of hostility towards Muslims in Europe, and the smear campaigns against Islam. In the same connection, he pointed out that Muslims are experiencing hard times, for they suffer dis-

crimination in all areas of social life, with the rise of some voices that continue to depict Islam as incompatible with the European values and identity.

The impact of the right-wing populism was reflected in the 2019 European parliamentary elections, the Secretary-General underlined, explaining that the increased popularity of far-right political parties across Europe concurred with the demonization of Muslims in the hate discourse.

The Secretary-General underlined that Muslims in Europe have come under attack as intruders that refuse to assimilate, because they are preserving their religious and cultural identity. He also emphasized that Muslims continue to experience mounting incidences of violence prompted by hate speech and discriminatory intent.

On another note, the Ad Hoc Ministerial Committee on Accountability for Myanmar over Human Rights Violations against Rohingya convened on the sidelines of the 48th session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers, in Islamabad, on 22-23 March 2022.

The OIC Secretary-General, Mr Hissein Brahim Taha, stated that the committee's meeting was held at a critical time in the midst of important developments related to the case against Myanmar at the International Court of Justice. He pointed out that this case sends a strong message to the international community about the Organization's collective and coordinated work to support the Rohingya, as well as its firm commitment to global ideals and principles of justice and accountability for human rights violations.

He also stressed that the Rohingya case is one of the top priorities on the OIC's agenda, one that the Organization has been following for over two decades. The situation of the Rohingya has not improved despite the efforts and calls of the OIC and the international community, the Secretary-General noted, pointing out that Myanmar continues to turn a blind eye to the horrific violations against the Rohingya's rights and has not fulfilled its international obligations to create a safe environment for willful, sustainable and dignified return of the Rohingya to their homeland.

Moreover, the OIC Secretary General praised the pivotal role of the Gambia, in its capacity as the Chair of the Committee, in leading the Organization's efforts on the international level, to ensure that Myanmar is held



accountable for the atrocities committed against the Rohingya Muslims. He also commended Bangladesh for hosting and sheltering over a million Rohingya refugees.

A side-event brainstorming session themed "Muslim World's Role in Promoting Peace,

Justice and Harmony" took place on 23 March 2022, on the sidelines of the 48th session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) in the Pakistani capital, Islamabad.

In his address to the session, Secretary-General, Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, said that the theme chosen for this event comes at an opportune time in the conjuncture within which the CFM's 48th session is being held, pointing out to the misery in the occupied Palestinian territories, in the Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir, and in Afghanistan, as well as the ordeal of the Rohingya and Muslims in other parts of the world.

He added that the OIC Charter calls the Member States in its preamble to preserve and enhance the noble human values of peace, compassion, tolerance, equality, justice and human dignity. He also highlighted that the Charter affirms in the 1st Article of Paragraph 6th "the need to promote interstate relations based on justice, mutual respect and good neighborliness to ensure global peace, security and harmony."

He also pointed out that the OIC has established a system for peace and security of its own that consists of many tools and mechanisms. In the same line, he underlined that the Peace, Security and Conflict Resolution Unit of OIC General Secretariat was established to serve as a focal point to support initiatives or peaceful settlement of disputes, in addition to the OIC Contact Group of Friends of Mediation as both a platform for collective mediation endeavors and a complementary tool for existing mechanisms of peace and conflict resolution.

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OIC Calls for Political Solution to Ukraine Crisis

The 48th session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) discussed the subject of the Russian-Ukrainian war during its sessions, held in Islamabad, and presented its stance on the war through Islamabad Declaration. The Declaration stated that the Council of Foreign Ministers deliberated on the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine, and called for an immediate cessation of hostilities to prevent further loss of life and ensure that the humanitarian crisis does not worsen in Ukraine. It also stressed the need for the establishment of humanitarian corridors to ensure safe movement of civilians from active conflict zones.

The Declaration expressed deep concern at the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation arising from the conflict in Ukraine. Also, it reaffirmed its unequivocal support for the universal and consistent application of the principles of the UN Charter, including non-use of force, respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states, non-interference in their internal affairs, and pacific settlement of disputes, to preserve and build international peace and security. The OIC General Secretariat followed with

concern the development of the situation in Ukraine, and urged, in a statement released at the beginning of the crisis, last February, the parties concerned to work towards resolving the crisis through peaceful means, thereby preventing its security and humanitarian repercussions.

The General Secretariat reiterated its support for international efforts to encourage dialogue and diplomacy, reduce tension and commence de-escalation. It also urged the relevant parties to continue negotiations to arrive at a political solution.

It is noteworthy that on the 24th of last February, after months of continuous escalation in the Ukrainian-Russian crisis, and the imposition of US and Western sanctions on Russian individuals and entities to deter Russia from carrying out its threats, Russian President, Vladimir Putin, announced the launch of a military operation in the east of its smaller neighbor, explaining that its main purpose is "self-defense" against major present threats and problems.

In a televised speech, Putin said that Russia's actions are linked not to encroaching on Ukraine's interests, but to protecting itself from "those who hold Ukraine hostage."

Hours after the start of the operation, the Russian Defense Ministry announced that high-precision weapons disrupted the military infrastructure, air defense facilities, military airfields and the aviation of the Ukrainian army.

Ukrainian President, Volodymyr Zelensky, imposed a state of martial law across the country, and appealed to neighboring and Western countries to help his country.

On the other hand, the United Nations warned that the world could face years of famine due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, said that the war exacerbated food insecurity in poor countries due to high prices. This led to a decline in global supply and thus a rise in the prices of alternatives. Global food prices rose by nearly 30% compared to the same period last year, according to United Nations reports.

He added that the world may face a global food shortage in the coming months, if Ukrainian exports are not restored to pre-war levels. The conflict cut off supplies from the ports of Ukraine, which previously exported large quantities of sunflower oil as well as grains such as corn and wheat.



Jakarta- Ahmad Batuni (DPA)- A new capital of Indonesia is being built on the island of Borneo. Officials say that the new city, located far from the old capital Jakarta, which gets struck frequently by floods and is suffocated by pollution from traffic congestion, will lead to greater development and social justice.

The Indonesian parliament recently passed a law approving the construction of the new capital, allowing for the start of the first phase of construction on an area of six thousand hectares.

256,000 hectares have been allocated for the establishment of the new city, which will be called "Nusantara", an ancient name for the Indonesian archipelago.

In 2019, Indonesian President, Mr. Joko Widodo, announced plans to build a completely new capital in the jungles of Borneo, halfway between Balikpapan and Samarinda. The President said that the current capital, Jakarta, is no longer fit to be the center of the country's administration, due to frequent floods, constant traffic congestion and air pollution.

The cost of moving to the new capital is estimated at more than \$32 billion.

Once the project is implemented as planned,

the first group of officials is scheduled to move to their new offices, in early 2024, which coincides with the last year of Joko's second term in office.

The government confirmed that the future city will be environmentally friendly, and that it will use cutting-edge technologies in its management.

It also stated that only electric cars will be allowed on the new roads that will be built there. "The new capital will allow the citizens to participate more in development," said Rwanda Wandy Tuturoong, an expert at the office of the President of the Republic. He also added, «The development processes have so far been concentrated in Java Island, where Jakarta is located. Transferring the center of economic growth from there will solve the problem.»

Java has a population of about 158 million people, nearly 60% of Indonesia's population, making it the most densely populated island in the world.

Jakarta continues to maintain its position, in order to maintain its status as the administrative and commercial center of the country. On the other hand, Jakarta faces the risk of having some of its parts being submerged under water. A study conducted by

researchers at Bandung Institute of Technology indicates that no other city in the world is drowning in water as quickly as Jakarta, as about 20% of its land is below sea level. This percentage is expected to nearly double by 2050.

About 630 million cubic meters of groundwater is pumped annually by commercial establishments, including hotels, malls and residential complexes, as well as population groups, according to local government data of the city.

The government explains that the risks of disasters such as floods, earthquakes, hurricanes and volcanic eruptions are very limited in the future capital.

Rwanda says that the government has consulted with representatives of the local population, is aware of their concerns and is looking towards providing solutions to them.

«We want the new city to benefit the local people, so that they are the masters of their own homes,» he added.

«This is the reason why we are setting up educational and training centers, so that in the future they can become managers of major companies that will invest here,» he explains.



UN Resolution to Adopt March 15 as International

Day to Combat Islamophobia

UN Resolution to Adopt March 15 as International Day to Combat Islamophobia

The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, commended a milestone achievement by the United Nations, through the adoption by the General Assembly on 15 March 2022, of a resolution setting March 15 as the International Day to Combat Islamophobia.

The Secretary-General reiterated the OIC's belief that the designation of such date as an international day will consolidate global awareness of the threat of hatred and fanaticism against Muslims, while encouraging the international community to take concrete measures to combat the phenomenon and to advance tolerance and peaceful coexistence across the world.

The Secretary-General underlined that incitement to hatred and intolerance on religious grounds can create conditions that pose a threat to global peace, security and stability, thus an antithesis to all freedoms. Therefore, the OIC considers the adoption of the resolution by the United Nations General Assembly as a pivotal step towards concrete measures to combat the menace of incitement to hatred, discrimination and violence based on one's religion.

The Secretary-General expressed the readi-

ness of the OIC to cooperate with the United Nations as well as with all members of the international community to promote unity and harmony, in order to achieve global peace and understanding.

Within the context of the events covered by this Journal's issue, the Secretary-General condemned the provocative actions of burning copies of the Holy Qur'an during anti-Muslim demonstrations, which took place in Linköping, Norrköping, and other cities in Sweden. The rallies, which were organized by the Danish Right-Wing Party Stram Kurs, had further substantiated the Muslim World's concerns of the alarming trend of Islamophobia perpetuated by extreme right supporters. The Secretary-General said that the event was a clear manifestation of the racist and xenophobic mindset of the organizers and that their action went against all accepted norms and values of civilized society. The Secretary-General reiterated his conviction that the provocative event did not reflect the views of the majority of Swedish and European citizens.

The OIC General Secretariat expressed its deep concern over recent public calls for genocide against Muslims by the 'Hindutva' proponents in Haridwar, State of Uttarakhand, and reported incidents of harassment

against Muslim women on social media websites, as well as banning of Muslim girl students from wearing hijab in the State of Karnataka.

It also considered the continued attacks targeting Muslims and their places of worship, the recent trend of anti-Muslim legislations in different States and rising incidents of violence against Muslims on flimsy pretexts by 'Hindutva' groups with impunity, as indicative of the growing trend of Islamophobia in India.

The OIC General Secretariat calls upon the international community, especially the UN mechanisms and Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council, to take necessary measures in this regard.

In that connection, the OIC General Secretariat urged once again India to ensure the safety, security and wellbeing of the Muslim community, while protecting the way of life of its members, and to bring the instigators and perpetrators of acts of violence and hate crimes against them to justice.

The OIC General Secretariat had submitted its Islamophobia Observatory periodic report to the 48th session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers, which was held in Islamabad, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, on 22-23 March 2022.



OIC Observatory:

Islamophobia Turns into Government Policies

The report listed COVID-19, among the major factors that led to the spread of Islamophobia globally in 2021, along with the agenda of the extreme right, the crisis of immigrants and refugees, attacks by extremist and terrorist groups, as well as the hate speech adopted by some media outlets.

From the end of 2020 to the beginning of 2022, the report concluded that Islamophobia would continue, especially with indications that it increased over the past five years. Meanwhile, the increase appeared to have remained constant over the past fourteen months from December 2020 until January 2022, with the exception of a noticeable disproportional decrease in 2021.

Measuring the extent of the phenomenon, the report found that Europe ranked first, followed by Asia then North America. The Observatory also indicated that France and Britain witnessed the highest rates of activities related to Islamophobia, especially through government policies that seemed to serve increasingly Far-right tendencies. The Observatory report also noted a similar pattern in Asia, especially in India and Sri Lanka, where the phenomenon has intensified due to existing tensions with Buddhist monks in Myanmar and the tension with the Rohingya Muslims. The report indicated that

attacks and incidents usually committed by elements of the far-right have receded in the America region. It also specified that different regions of the world witnessed an increase in Islamophobia during the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Some social media sites users blamed Muslims for

Measuring the extent of the phenomenon, the report found that Europe ranked first, followed by Asia then North America.

spreading the virus, claiming that some of them insisted on performing congregational prayers, or deliberately spreading the pandemic.

The report identified a change in negative stereotypes directed against Muslims through the decrease in the volume of of-

fensive stereotypes of Muslims, matched by its transformation into government policies and political pressures exerted by far-right movements and pressure groups on governments. The report said that there was a decline in incidents of attacks on mosques and copies of the Holy Qur'an, and in incitement to social media or insults directed against the Holy Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be on him.

As for hijab or burqa (face cover) wearing, the report noted that due to the spread of protective medical masks prompted by COVID-19, 2020 witnessed a decline in the severity of rejecting this outfit. However; the problem soon reappeared with the pandemic receding. France, Switzerland India, and Austria were among the countries that banned hijab in government departments, universities and schools.

However, the report highlighted some global efforts to promote harmony and tolerance. In addition, measures to support Muslim groups at the level of both the UN and the EU have been adopted. The report also underscored efforts exerted against far-right groups in the US, Brazil, Canada, Spain, Britain, Germany and Australia. The UN embarked on implementing its Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate speech.

Hissein Brahim Taha:

I Made Several Contacts to Stress the Organization's Firm Stance on Al-Aqsa

Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, has reaffirmed the OIC's total commitment and support for the right of the Palestinian people to sovereignty over their occupied land, including East Al-Quds as the capital of the State of Palestine. He also underlined the religious and spiritual centrality of this city and the eternal connection of Muslims across the world to the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque. The OIC Secretary-General's address was made at the opening session of the open-ended extraordinary meeting of the OIC Executive Committee at the level of Permanent Representatives to discuss the ongoing Israeli aggression against the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque. Held at the OIC General Secretariat on 25 April 2022, at the request of the Republic of Indonesia, the meeting was presided over by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Chair of the 14th Islamic Summit.

The Secretary-General disclosed that he had dispatched letters to several international actors through which he conveyed the OIC's rejection and condemnation of attempts by Israel to impose temporal and spatial division on the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque. He also requested these actors and the inter-

national community to act swiftly to stop Israel's aggressions against the holy sites.

OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, also called for the mobilization of political, economic and media efforts like never before to protect the Al-Quds and its holy sites, support the steadfastness of its inhabitants in confronting Israeli Judaization plans, and defend the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. He called for responsible action and engagement with all international actors and relevant international bodies to take appropriate political and legal measures against Israel, the occupation power, and to pressure it to stop its ongoing violations against the Palestinian people and their holy sites. He urged all international actors to assume their responsibilities and get involved to sponsor a political track that will end the Israeli occupation and bring about the establishment of an independent and sovereign state of Palestine on the borders of 1967, with East Al-Quds as its capital, in accordance with international law, relevant resolutions of the United Nations and the Arab peace initiative.

For his part, the Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the OIC, Dr. Saleh Bin Hamad Suhaibani, delivered a

statement saying: The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud had declared during his presidency of the 29th Arab Summit in Dhahran that "Palestine is our first cause and Palestine and its people are in the conscience of Arabs and Muslims." He reiterated at the same time, "this will continue to be so until the brotherly Palestinian people get all their legitimate rights, notably the establishment of the State of Palestine. The cause of Palestine is the essential pillar of the OIC work and the focus of our attention until the brotherly people of Palestine enjoy all their rights guaranteed by resolutions of international legitimacy and the Arab peace initiative."

Dr. Suhaibani stated that while the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia strongly condemns and denounces the repeated and provocative Israeli onslaught and aggression against worshippers in the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque, it persistently calls on the international community to act effectively to assume its role in holding Israeli occupation forces fully responsible for those crimes and violations and their negative repercussion on the chances to revive the peace process, as the provocative acts threaten to ignite conflict in the region.



Al-Quds Al-Sharif is a Red Line for Muslim Ummah

In its final communiqué, the Open-ended Extraordinary Meeting of the OIC Executive Committee at the Level of Permanent Representatives to Discuss the Ongoing Israeli Aggression against the Blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque, held at the OIC Headquarters, on 25 April 2022, affirmed that Al-Quds Al-Sharif and the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque, Muslims' first qibla and third holiest mosque, is a red line for the Muslim Ummah, and that no security or stability can be established without its full liberation from occupation and return to the Palestinian people and Muslim Ummah. It also called upon Member States to make concerted and individual efforts and rally round and defend Al-Quds and its holy sites, and address Israel's crimes, provide support for the Palestinian people and the wherewithal for their resilience in the face of barbaric Israeli attacks. It furthermore requested them to respect and implement the OIC resolutions on the Palestinian cause as the central cause of the Muslim Ummah and *raison d'être* of the OIC.

The meeting also Condemned the criminal Israeli aggressions against the Palestinians, particularly in Al-Quds and rejected all illegal measures in the city aimed at enforcing Israeli colonial control on it and altering its historical and legal status, as well as its demographic composition and Arab and Islamic character. It also condemned the continuous cruel attack by the occupation army and extremists on worshipers in the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque and Haram Al-Sharif, and on the Palestinian people, which have dangerously escalated during the blessed month

of Ramadan and led to the arrest and injury of hundreds of unarmed Muslim worshipers, and to damages inflicted on the facilities of Al-Aqsa Mosque, in a repeated desecration of its sanctity and the religious rites of the worshipers; a serious provocation of Muslims' sensibilities and continued offensive against the Palestinians, Al-Quds and its holy



sites.

In the same connection, the communiqué held Israel responsible for the fallouts of these escalations, rejected all illegal measures against the city, including attempts at temporal and spatial division of the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque and Al-Haram Al-Sharif, and demanded their immediate halt. It also affirmed that there is no legal, religious

or historical legitimacy for these dangerous steps that prejudice the sanctity of the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Furthermore, the meeting reaffirmed the sovereignty of the State of Palestine over all Palestinian lands occupied in 1967, including East Al-Quds Al-Sharif, and its borders with neighboring states, and restated its opposition to any steps that might prejudice that. In the same connection, it underscored its rejection and condemnation of any misleading designation of Al-Aqsa Mosque. It also called for refraining from using religious names on Al-Aqsa that falsify the Mosque's history and existing legal and historical status, affirming that such act would contribute to stoking and perpetuation of the conflict. Relatedly, the communiqué supported the steadfastness and legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, notably their right to freedom and a sovereign independent state, with East Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, on the basis of the two-state solution, in accordance with the international law, the Arab peace initiative and accredited international terms of reference. It also called on Israel to stop all escalations and aggression in the entire occupied Palestinian territories and to stop all measures that threaten security and peace and undermine the two-state solution and the chances of achieving just and comprehensive peace; the Arab and Islamic strategic choice and a regional and international necessity. It also called for the provision of urgent humanitarian aid to alleviate the plight of the Palestinians and strengthen their resilience.

Permanent Representatives Reject Selective Implementation of International Law

The Open-ended Extraordinary Meeting of the OIC Executive Committee at the Level of Permanent Representatives to Discuss the Ongoing Israeli Aggression against the Blessed Masjid Al-Aqsa called on all Member States and their permanent representatives at international organizations to act and confront this escalation at all levels, including by writing to the United Nations Secretary-General and the Security Council about the illegal steps by Israel, the illegal occupation authority, to create a new reality in Al-Quds Al-Sharif and to divide the Mosque temporarily and spatially, requesting them to assume their responsibility in this regard.

The final communiqué affirmed its rejection of selective implementation of international law, including international human rights law and the continued exclusion of the Palestinian people, who have been suffering for more than fifty-five years of injustice under military occupation. It stressed that the Palestinian people cannot be left to the mercy of harsh and illegal military occupation embodying all forms of violence, tyranny and apartheid. Similarly, it called for the provision of all rights and protection guaranteed under international law and granted to all other peoples.

It also emphasized its absolute rejection of attempts at justifying ongoing Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people and called for an end to the exemption enjoyed by Israel, the colonial occupation authority, in relation to its obligations under the international law and demanded the international community to hold Israel accountable for all its crimes against the Palestinian people.

It stressed the role of the historical Hashemite custodianship of His Majesty King Abdullah II Ibn Al-Hussein, King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, for the protection of Islamic and Christian holy sites in Al-Quds and the existing historical and legal status of the city. In this connection, it underlined the need to remove all restrictions and encumbrances hampering the work of Al-Waqf Department in managing the affairs of the blessed Masjid Al-Aqsa and to preserve its facilities.

It also called for more effective measures to overcome obstacles to the exercise by the Palestinian people of their right to self-

termination, by ensuring provision of protection against the tyranny and aggression of the colonial occupation authorities and holding them accountable for their crimes, including the crime of apartheid. Likewise, it called for intensifying efforts to achieve a just solution based on international law and legitimacy and to end colonial occupation of the land of the State of Palestine.

It called on Member States and their permanent representatives at international fora to act to provide international protection for the Palestinian people and end their plight by halting the colonial Israeli occupation, established on the land of the State of Palestine in defiance of all legal, moral and humanitarian principles and demanded an end to the ongoing injustice that has deprived generations of Palestinians from the enjoyment of their basic rights, including their right to self-determination and national independence.

The Representatives called on the international community to respect the United Nations resolutions on Al-Quds to intensify pressure on Israel to end its illegal occupation of the land of the State of Palestine, occupied since 1967, and compel it to abide by the Charter of the United Nations, the principles of the international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions on the Palestinian cause, including resolutions adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which affirmed that Masjid Al-Aqsa is an Islamic location for Muslim worship and integral part of the World Heritage Sites locations.

The Communiqué also affirmed the need for Israel to respect the existing historical and legal status of the Al-Quds and return to the pre-2000 condition, in a way that respects the fact that the 144-dunum wide Masjid Al-Aqsa is a place of worship of Muslims exclusively, and that visits by non-Muslims to the place should be organized by the Islamic Waqf department, affiliated to the Jordanian Ministry of Islamic Waqf and Holy Sites in its capacity, as legal entity with exclusive prerogative to manage the Haram affairs and organize access to it.

The Communiqué also affirmed that the time has come for the international commu-

nity to assume its responsibilities towards the actions of the colonial occupation authorities over fifty-five years of occupation and stand up to this illegal system of continued aggression and colonialism at all levels by taking further serious measures and steps to ensure accountability for all violations perpetrated and to ensure justice for the long-suffering Palestinian people.

It demanded the international community to compel Israel, the illegal occupation authority, to rescind its illegal decision to annex Al-Quds, recalled the Islamic position calling for using all means to confront this decision, and invited it to respect all relevant, United Nations resolutions, in particular the two Security Council resolutions.

The Meeting of the Permanent Representatives affirmed that the road to achieving peace and security in the Middle East region starts with ending the Israeli occupation and the withdrawal of the occupation army and colonialists from the land of the State of Palestine, primarily from the City of Al-Quds Al-Sharif, in implementation of relevant international resolutions. It also welcomed the outcomes of the Fourth Meeting of the Arab Ministerial Committee tasked with international action to challenge the illegal Israeli actions and policies in occupied Al-Quds, held in Amman, on 21 April 2022. The Final Communiqué also called for intensifying coordination and cooperation between the OIC, the League of Arab States, the United Nations and other relevant international organizations, to which Member States have representatives, to respond to any step that might prejudice the legal and historical status of the City of Al-Quds.

It also entrusted the OIC Secretary-General to follow up on the developments in this regard, and to convey the position of the OIC to international bodies and report thereon to the next session of the Council of Foreign Ministers.

Relatedly, it affirmed the centrality of the role of Al-Quds Committee under the leadership of His Majesty King Mohamed VI, King of the Kingdom of Morocco, in challenging the dangerous measures taken by the Israeli occupation authorities in Al-Quds Al-Sharif, and commended the role of Bayt Mal Al-Quds Agency.

Secretary-General Made Extensive Contacts to Face Israeli Attacks on Al-Aqsa



The General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation took a number of actions and established several contacts prior to the convening of the open-ended extraordinary meeting of the OIC Executive Committee at the level of Permanent Representatives to discuss the ongoing Israeli aggression against the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque and Al-Quds Al-Sharif. The Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, His Excellency Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, sent identical messages to several international actors regarding the continuous Israeli attacks on the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque, including storming it, closing its gates, and brutal attacks on defenseless worshipers inside it, which led to the injury and arrest of hundreds.

In his messages addressed to the Secretary of State of the United States, the Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, France and China, in addition to the United Nations Secretary-General and the European Union High Representative

for Foreign Affairs, the Secretary-General asserted that this dangerous escalation of Israel's aggression against Al-Aqsa Mosque is an attack on the religious rights and sensibilities of the entire Muslim Ummah. He also described the escalation as a flagrant violation of the relevant international resolutions and instruments; which might stoke religious war and violence in the region and beyond.

The Secretary-General also called on all the international actors to move swiftly in these critical circumstances, to pressure Israel, the occupying power, to guarantee the rights of Muslims to pray freely in Al-Aqsa Mosque and to preserve the existing historical and legal status of the holy sites in Occupied Al-Quds.

The Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Hissein Brahim Taha, made a telephone call to H.E. Dr. Riad Al-Malki, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Palestine, during which he discussed the ongoing Israeli attacks against the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque in flagrant

violation of international law and relevant United Nations resolutions.

For his part, the Minister of Foreign Affairs briefed the Secretary-General on the grave situation due to the escalation of violations and daily incursions by extremist settlers, under the protection of the Israeli occupation forces, targeting the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque and the worshipers inside it, and attempts to impose the temporal and spatial division of Al-Aqsa Mosque.

The Secretary-General also made a telephone call to H.E. Mr. Ayman Al Safadi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, during which he discussed the ongoing Israeli attacks against the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque.

For his part, the Jordanian Foreign Minister briefed the Secretary-General on the efforts made by Jordan with the international actors to stop the Israeli violations against the blessed Masjid Al-Aqsa, stressing the need to preserve the historical and legal status of the holy sites.

OIC Condemns the Closure of Al-Haram Al-Ibrahimi in Al-Khalil



The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) strongly condemned the Israeli occupation forces closure of Al-Haram Al-Ibrahimi in the city of Al-Khalil (Hebron) to worshippers, in addition to the continued raids and attacks on the blessed Masjid Al-Aqsa, considering these provocative measures an attack on the sanctity of Islamic holy sites, and stressing the OIC's rejection of attempts to divide the blessed Masjid Al-Aqsa temporally and spatially.

The OIC held the Israeli occupation authorities responsible for the consequences of their continued attacks on the Palestinian people and the ongoing violations of the sanctity of holy sites. It also called on the international community to take urgent action to put an end to these serious violations that fuel violence, tension and instability in the region. In last April, the month that saw mounting attacks against Al-Quds Al-Sharif and the blessed Masjid Al-Aqsa, the OIC cautioned against threats made by extremist settler groups to slaughter sacrifices inside the courtyards of the blessed Masjid Al-Aqsa. It also strongly condemned the assault by dozens of extremist settlers on the blessed

Al-Aqsa and Talmudic rituals they performed therein with support and protection of the Israeli occupation forces. It considered this dangerous escalation as a blatant provocation for sentiments of the entire Ummah, and a flagrant violation of relevant international resolutions and instruments.

His Excellency Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, OIC Secretary-General, held Israel fully responsible for the possible consequences of the continued cold-blooded killings of the Palestinian people, and the continued violations of the sanctities that would fuel religious conflict, extremism and instability in the region. He also called on the international community, especially the UN Security Council, to act to put an end to such repeated violations, and to compel Israel to respect the sanctity of the holy shrines and the political and religious rights of the Palestinian people.

The OIC strongly condemned the evictions and demolition of Palestinian homes in Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood in the occupied city of Al-Quds, as part of the policies of Judaization, colonial settlement, and forced displacement of Palestinian families in a fla-

grant violation of International Law and the Geneva Conventions.

The OIC General Secretariat affirmed that all these Israeli measures in occupied Al-Quds are null and void under international law and resolutions of international legitimacy.

The OIC condemned the heinous crime of the Israeli occupation forces that killed three Palestinian youths in the city of Nablus. The OIC considered that this crime fell within the context of the policy of field execution and premeditated killings perpetrated against the Palestinian people, in flagrant violation of international law and the Fourth Geneva Convention.

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation strongly condemned the crimes of successive field executions committed by the Israeli occupation forces, which resulted in the death of three Palestinian citizens in March 2022, which raised the death toll since the beginning of this year to 20 Palestinian citizens, in addition to the injury of hundreds of Palestinian citizens, considering this a dangerous escalation in crimes and in the continuous attacks against the Palestinian people.

OIC: Particularity and Specialization

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation represents two billion Muslims, i.e. more than a quarter of the world's population, distributed over 57 Member States, a number exceeding a quarter of the United Nations Member States. This makes it an international legal force that has its own influential weight in the political, economic, social, cultural, scientific fields, etc. through its subsidiary, specialized and affiliated organizations, in the aforementioned fields, as well as in other fields. It is also a voting power in the different United Nations organizations and bodies, with competent personnel contributing to the human movement.

It is the Organization that was established following the arson of the blessed Masjid Al-Aqsa on 21 August 1969, on inflamed and angry feelings that represented the conscience of the Muslim world as a whole. This makes Al-Aqsa and Al-Quds Al-Sharif an inclusive cause of the Member States, drawing inspiration from the Islamic religious dimension, a common denominator for those countries and their peoples.

The membership of the Organization includes countries spreading over Asia, Africa, Europe and South America, which reflects the demographic development of those regions over centuries after the Islamic religion reached them and became a living part of their details, mosaics and fossil roots that take their permanence from the inevitability of this true religion. This has marked the cultural aspect with characteristics and features that stem from a common understanding in many aspects of daily life. This prevailing understanding leads to a lifestyle that can be built upon in harmonious policies, incorporating the principles of social diversity, as well as the necessities of coexistence and tolerance, based on the understanding of the Other, positive neighborliness and mutual respect.

On another level, the specialization of this Organization, which has been existing for over half a century, entails its utility and reaffirms the need for its continuation, for it's working in several main areas. The phenomenon of bullying Muslim communities, under the name of Islamophobia is one of the main issues driving the OIC to exert more efforts and do more follow-ups, especially as it is connected primarily to the role of the Organization, and as it impacts its peoples and the Muslims living in non-Member Countries. This entails that all solutions to the problems stemming from this phenomenon, which has become an actual reality, should always be derived from its resolutions, so that they could be implemented through the Organization's recognized channels.

Relatedly, we notice that the Organization also specializes in issues of Muslim communities that live outside their original societies. The OIC takes upon itself to follow up on the conditions of these minorities, in accordance with the rules of the relationship with the other, in a way that serves their interests, survival and coexistence in their environments, and thus guarantees them a decent life, while preserving their cultural specificity and rights, guaranteed by the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and relevant laws of the countries of these communities.

Also as part of its competence, the Organization has a fundamental mission to undermine the plans of some extremist armed groups acting in the name of Islam, especially those misleading messages full of incitement and distortion, through the OIC Sawt Al-Hikma Center. In this context, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation contributes to the fight against terrorism and extremism. In addition to Sawt Al-Hikma Center, the OIC has other specialized bodies and organizations, such as the International Islamic Fiqh Academy, which provides fatwas and research, within an impeccable religious reference, and presents the correct image of Islam.

Part of the role of the International Islamic Fiqh is to connect religious institutions in the Member States to redress stereotypes and misconceptions, such as those that circulated in rural environments in some Member States, with regard to vaccines and treatments, which led to the aversion of a large segment of people in those areas from taking the vaccines, propelled by unfounded religious convictions.

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation can also be considered an incubator of the process of Islamic economy development, by adopting standards and specifications for halal products, sukuk and Islamic banking in general, to contribute to the efforts of the Member States to develop a practical vision for these sectors, while contributing to their development, legalization, and useful implementation.

On the humanitarian level, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation employs the tremendous humanitarian effort based on the principle of solidarity and assistance, in light of the suffering of many groups in the Islamic world from famine, civil wars and natural disasters, which led to cases of asylum, displacement and poverty.

More than 53 years have elapsed since the establishment of the Organization, which has grown outside its traditional and recognized political and economic framework, and has been able to lay building blocks in many areas, to prove its utility and the urgent need for its existence on a daily basis.



Aiman Abboushi

Editor of OIC Journal

The membership of the Organization includes countries spreading over Asia, Africa, Europe and South America, which reflects the demographic development of those regions over centuries after the Islamic religion reached them and became a living part of their details, mosaics and fossil roots that take their permanence from the inevitability of this true religion

Secretary-General Holds Discussions with New Prime Minister of Pakistan



Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, met in Makkah al-Mukarramah with the new Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, H.E. Mr.

Shehbaz Sharif, who was on an official visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

During the meeting, discussions centered on the situation in the Muslim world and issues included in the OIC agenda, in particular the situation in Palestine, Afghanistan, and Jammu and Kashmir, in addition to the issue of Islamophobia. The two sides underscored the necessity to enhance cooperation among the Member States to defend the causes of the Muslim Ummah.

The meeting also discussed cooperation between the OIC and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Chair of the 48th session of the Council of Foreign Ministers. The Secretary-General reiterated the readiness of the OIC General Secretariat to support the Government of Pakistan in the implementation of the resolutions adopted by the 48th session of

the Council of Foreign Ministers, held in Islamabad on 22-23 March 2022.

Hissein Taha Holds talks with Saudi Deputy Foreign Minister

The Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received a written message from the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia, Chair of the Islamic Summit. The message was delivered to him by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Permanent Representative to the OIC, Dr. Saleh Al-Suhaibani.

In his message, King Salman underlined the confidence the OIC Member States placed in the Secretary-General to lead the Organization, commending Mr. Taha's resolve to promote the work of the OIC and serve the just causes of the Muslim Ummah.

The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques wished the Secretary-General success in his efforts to promote the OIC, achieve the noble goals and principles the Organization was established upon, and advance joint Islamic action for the benefit of the Muslim world's peoples and nations.

King Salman also affirmed that Saudi Arabia, as the host country, will spare no effort to support the OIC to fulfil its principles and objectives for prosperity, stability and peace in the Muslim world. He went on to stress the crucial role of the Organization and the need for the OIC to continue exerting its efforts to foster Muslim solidarity through promoting unity, fostering unison, rejecting discord and extremism, and addressing the challenges facing Muslim countries.



On another note, the Secretary-General received at the Headquarters of the General Secretariat, H.E. Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Eng. Waleed Abdulkarim El Kherejji. During the meeting, the Secretary-General praised the great and active role played by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in promoting joint Islamic action and serving the issues of the Muslim world.

Images



Secretary-General Receives Dean of African Consular Corps



SG Receives African Countries' Consuls General Accredited to Jeddah



Hissein Taha Receives Qatar's Representative to the OIC



Reception of UAE's Permanent Representative



Secretary-General meets Uzbekistan's Representative to the OIC



Reception of Azerbaijan's Representative



OIC Secretary-General meets Tunisia's Representative to the OIC



Hissein Taha Receives Ankara's Representative

Images



Reception of UN Assistant SG for Middle East, Asia and the Pacific



Hissein Taha Receives Indonesia's Representative to the OIC



Reception of Senegal's Representative to the OIC



Secretary-General Receives Representative of Turkmenistan



Secretary-General receives Plenipotentiary of Gabon in Riyadh



Secretary-General Receives Iraq's Permanent Representative



Reception of Kyrgyzstan's Permanent Representative



Hissein Taha Receives Niger's Representative to the OIC

Images



Secretary-General Receives Consul General of Algeria



Hissein Taha Receives Libya's Representative to the OIC



Hissein Taha Receives Permanent Representative of Djibouti to the OIC



Secretary-General Receives Consul General of Lebanon



Secretary-General Receives Chargé d'affaires of Somalia's Permanent Delegation



Reception of Tajikistan's Representative to the OIC



SG Receives Ambassadors of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the Gulf Countries



Secretary-General Receives EU Special Envoy to the OIC

OIC and EU Hold Webinar on Freedom of Religion and Belief



Hissein Brahim Taha: 16/18 and its Action Plan Constitute Groundwork for International Efforts to Combat Hatred

The Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, addressed the inaugural high-level session of the 8th Meeting of The Istanbul Process, held virtually on 16 February 2022, under the theme “10th Anniversary of Human Rights Council Resolution 16/18: Looking Back and Moving Forward’.

The meeting, hosted virtually by the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, witnessed broad participation of States from all regions, relevant UN officials and experts, religious leaders, civil society representatives, businesspersons, and journalists.

The OIC Secretary-General thanked the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for organizing the 8th Meeting of the Istanbul Process. He reiterated the importance of this platform as an important step taken by the international community to combat hate speech, intolerance, discrimination and incitement to violence based on religion or belief. In his statement, Mr. Hissein Taha expressed OIC’s concern over the continued rise of hatred, intolerance, discrimination and violence on the basis of faith. He mentioned that the phenomenon is a threat to humanity as it undermines peace and security in the world, recalling the terrorist attacks that took place in New Zealand and Sri Lanka in 2019.

The OIC Secretary-General underlined the crucial importance of collective efforts at international level to reverse extremism and intolerance tendencies and to prevent atrocities from reoccurring, by using all available means and tools. The Resolution 16/18 and its Action Plan, he said, remain a solid bedrock upon which the international community could build a collective response to fight hate speech, intolerance, discrimination and incitement to violence based on religion or belief.

On a related note, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the European Union (EU) held a joint Webinar on Freedom of Religion and Belief, Inter-Cultural and Inter-Faith Dialogue on 24 February 2022.

The OIC General Secretariat was represented in this webinar by the Cultural Affairs Department, the Dialogue and Outreach Department, the Islamophobia Observatory, and Sawt Al-Hikma Center. The OIC Permanent Observer to the European Union, Ambassador Ismat Jahan, addressed the opening session on behalf of the OIC.

The two parties exchanged views on multiple topics such as frameworks to promote tolerance and interfaith dialogue, protection of religious minorities, and strengthening inter-cultural dialogue. The two organizations also shared good practices and experiences on issues of mutual interest, including the opportunities to collaborate further through concrete joint actions.

Last March, the OIC General Secretariat and the European External Action Service of the European Union (EU) held their fifth Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) on 28 March 2022, at the Headquarters of the General Secretariat in Jeddah.

The meeting was opened by a statement by the Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs, Amb. Yusuf Al Dobeay, who highlighted the various areas of cooperation between the OIC and the EU, and expressed the will of the OIC to further promote this cooperation.

During the meeting, the two sides tackled a range of issues of common interest pertaining to the political, humanitarian, economic, social, and cultural fields. They also discussed cooperation in the areas of education, health, women empowerment, capacity building, Islamophobia, interfaith dialogue, the situation post COVID-19 pandemic, and election observation.

New Political Consultations between OIC and Beijing Chinese Special Envoy to Middle East Visits OIC

The Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received at the Headquarters of the General Secretariat, last April, the Special Envoy of the People's Republic of China to the Middle East, Mr. Zhai Jun. During this meeting, the two sides reviewed the state of relations between the OIC and China and discussed ways and means of promoting dialogue and cooperation in various fields. The Secretary-General reiterated the special attention the OIC devotes to Muslim communities in non-Member States, including the Xinjiang autonomous region of China.

The OIC General Secretariat held a new round of political consultations with the People's Republic of China, last January, via videoconference.

During these consultations, the delegation of the OIC General Secretariat was headed by the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Yousef Al-Dobeay, while the delegation of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs was headed by the Vice Foreign Minister, Mr. Deng Li.

During this meeting, the two sides discussed relations between the Muslim world and the People's Republic of China. They also reviewed and evaluated the existing cooperation between the OIC and the People's Republic of China, and explored prospects for strengthening this cooperation in several fields, especially the economic and financial fields, as well as higher education, cultural exchange and



dialogue among civilizations.

Also, they exchanged views on a number of issues of common interest, notably the Palestinian cause and the situation of Muslim minorities and communities in non-Member States.

At the conclusion of the meeting, it was agreed on the importance of continuing these consultations and working to hold them on an annual basis.

OIC Underscores Importance of Agricultural Commodities in Alleviating Poverty



In his statement at the opening ceremony of the OIC Forum on the Development of Strategic Agricultural Commodities and Experts Meeting on Food Safety and Healthy Food, held (in-person and virtually) in Doha, State of Qatar, from 14 to 16 February 2022, Assistant OIC Secretary-General for Economic Affairs, H.E. Dr. Ahmad

Kawesa Sengendo, emphasized that agricultural commodities are crucial for food and nutrition security as well as for wealth creation and alleviating poverty in a number of OIC Member States.

In the same connection, he highlighted that during the COVID-19 pandemic, agricultural commodity market volatility increased remarkably and many OIC commodity dependent countries became more vulnerable. Dr. Sengendo also remarked that such vulnerability was at the core of many economic and social challenges faced by many OIC Member States. He also underlined that addressing this phenomenon is central to achieving sustainable development, alleviating poverty and enhancing food security.

The Forum and Experts Meeting addressed issues related to the implementation of OIC Programmes of Action for the Development of Three Agricultural Commodities, namely wheat, rice and cassava, which were endorsed by the 8th OIC Ministerial Conference on Food Security and Agricultural Development, held in Istanbul, Turkey, in 2021. They also discussed food safety, halal food standards, building resilient food systems, increasing agricultural investments, and enhancing human and institutional capacities in the OIC Member States.

OIC Secretary-General on Tour of



The Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, headed to Africa on official visit to the Republic of Chad and the Republic of Niger in the Sahel and Lake Chad regions. His Excellency Mahamat Idriss Déby Itno, President of the Transitional Military Council of Chad received the OIC Secretary-General at the presidential palace in N'Djamena.

During the meeting, the President of Chad underlined the special interest Chad attaches to the OIC and its institutions. He also stressed the need to further strengthen its activities especially in the Sahel and Lake Chad region. He also emphasized the need for the OIC and its Member States to further support the countries of the region in combating terrorism, extremism and promote security, stability and development.

For his part, the Secretary-General thanked the President of Chad for the audience, and the confidence reposed in him to lead this important Organization. He also briefed the President on the key files and works of the OIC.

H.E. Hissein Brahim Taha praised Chad's effective role in supporting the OIC and its programmes. He also commended the role of Chad in enhancing security, stability and development in the region, especially in Mali and other neighboring countries.

During his working visit to the Republic of Cameroon, the OIC Secretary-General had discussions with the Prime Minister, H.E. Dr. Joseph Ngute, and the Foreign Minister, H.E. Dr. Lejeune Mbella Mbella. During their

meetings, the two sides discussed issues of mutual interest.

H.E. Hissein Brahim Taha thanked Cameroon for its active involvement and support of the activities of the OIC. He also called on Member States to demonstrate further solidarity in tackling challenges facing the Sahel and Lake Chad basin countries and to support the economic development of the two re-

The Secretary General's tour includes Chad, Cameroon, Niger and Senegal

gions.

For their part, the Cameroonian leaders congratulated the Secretary-General on his assumption of the leadership of the Organization and called on the OIC to further prioritize cooperation among Member States in the areas of road infrastructure network and electrical grid interconnection. Other areas of collaboration highlighted included phar-

maceutical and vaccine productions and the promotion of science and technology.

President of the Republic of Niger, H.E. Mohamed Bazoum, received the OIC Secretary-General, in Niamey. The meeting reviewed aspects of cooperation between Niger and the OIC, and ways to strengthen joint Islamic action and enhance the spirit of solidarity in meeting the challenges facing Niger.

The Secretary General thanked Niger as the current Chair of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers, for its efforts in support of the OIC's projects and especially the establishment of the OIC Regional Mission for the Sahel and Lake Chad countries in Niger.

For his part, the President expressed Niger's constant readiness to support OIC activities. He also called upon OIC Member States and Institutions to further contribute to finding solutions to security problems and the food crises the Sahel and Lake Chad basin regions are facing presently.

The Secretary-General also met with the Prime Minister of Niger, Mr. Ouhoumoudou Mahamadou, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hassoumi Massaoudou. The two sides discussed issues of interest to the Islamic world as well as the OIC's role in resolving conflicts, and promoting mediation efforts. They also underlined the need to exert more efforts to activate joint Islamic actions and overcome the various challenges facing the Muslim world, particularly with regard to countering terrorism, fighting against Islamophobia and achieving comprehensive economic development.

Some African OIC Member States



They equally discussed the efforts of the countries in the regions to tackle the security and development challenges in the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin regions in addition to the political situations in Mali, Libya and Burkina Faso.

The Secretary-General stressed the need for Member States to continue supporting the Organization's regional mission in Niger to help it carry out its work in development efforts.

Secretary-General visits Senegal and meets with its President in Dakar

The President of the Republic of Senegal, H.E. Mr. Macky Sall, received the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Houssein Ibrahim Taha, who was on an official visit to the Republic of Senegal last March.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed several issues of concern to the Ummah, including security, developmental issues and the upcoming session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers, which was held later in Islamabad, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. They also discussed the OIC Standing Committee for Information and Cultural Affairs (COMIAC), Chaired by the Senegalese President.

The Secretary General commended Senegal for its active contributions to joint Islamic actions and solidarity in the areas of counter terrorism and violent extremism.

For his part, the President commended the leadership of the Secretary-General and expressed his commitment to further support the Organization in dealing with the chal-

lenges facing the Member States. He also stressed the need to enhance intra-OIC cooperation in the socioeconomic, security and counter terrorism domains.

As part of the visit, the Secretary-General and his accompanying delegation, had earlier met with the Foreign Minister H.E. Ms. Aissata Tall Sall, with whom he discussed OIC-Senegal bilateral cooperation and issues

The meetings focused on Sahel, Lake Chad Basin and several issues affecting African Member States

affecting the region.

During his visit to the Republic of Niger, as part of his tour of the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin Countries, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Houssein Ibrahim Taha, visited King Abdullah Girls Campus of the Islamic University in Niger, an affiliated institution of the OIC.

The Secretary-General commended the establishment of the additional campus for the University, as part of the OIC Member States' efforts to support the educational needs of the people in Africa, particularly girls' education in the Sahel and Lake Chad basin regions.

H.E. Mr. Houssein Ibrahim Taha added that the campus generously funded by the foundation of the late King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, would help in promoting the role of women in the socio-economic development and their contribution to human development in OIC Member States.

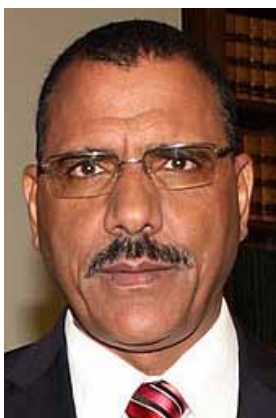
The construction of the Islamic University in Niger new campus, which serves thousands of students from many countries on the African continent, enhances the position of the institution as one the best citadels of learning in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The Secretary-General also paid a similar visit to the Waqf building, affiliated to the University, and the recently established OIC Regional Office for the Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin regions based in Niamey, Niger.

Also, the OIC Secretary-General visited the former Secretary-General of the Organization, H.E. Mr. Hamid Algabid, at his residence in Niamey, Niger.

The visit was on the sidelines of the Secretary-General's tour of the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin Countries.

The two sides discussed global issues, especially the latest developments in the Muslim World and ways to enhance security, stability and development in OIC Member States.



H.E The President of Niger



Head of Transition Govt. in Mali



H.E The President of Ghana



H.E The President of Benin



H.E The President of Togo

OIC General-Secretary's Special Envoy for Africa on Tour to a Number of African Countries



Mr. Nassirou Bako-Arifari, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) for Africa, went on a tour to several African Member-States to deliver messages from the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, as part of the Organization's work to promote its action in the African region and promote its programmes and projects. Mr. Arifari's visit took place following his appointment by the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers, held in Islamabad, as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Africa.

His Excellency Mr. Nana Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana, current President of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), received on 25 April 2022, in Accra, Mr. Nassirou Bako-Arifari, who delivered to him a written message from H.E. the Secretary-General. The meeting reviewed the various challenges facing the West African sub-region, as well as ways and means to enhance dialogue and cooperation between the Organization and the Economic Community of West African States.

Also, H.E. Mr. Zubairu DADA, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, received, on April 27, 2022, in Abuja, Mr. Arifari.

During this meeting, the Special Envoy delivered a written message from the Secretary-General of the OIC, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim TAHA, to President Muhammadu Buhari, President of the Federal

Republic of Nigeria.

The meeting was an opportunity to underscore the importance attached by the OIC Secretary-General to Nigeria's role within the OIC and in the region, and to exchange views on developments in the West African sub-region, and in Mali, in particular. The meeting also underlined the need to join efforts in this regard.

Furthermore, the Special Envoy of the OIC Secretary-General met in Abuja, with General Francis Behanzin, Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security of ECOWAS. During this audience, they discussed the situation in the sub-region, including in Mali, and ways and means to strengthen dialogue and cooperation between the OIC and ECOWAS.

Similarly, H.E. Mr. Mohamed Bazoum, President of the Republic of Niger, received, on April 29, 2022, in Niamey, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, as part of his mission in the West African sub-region.

During this audience, the Special Envoy delivered to H.E. the Nigerian President a written message from H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha. Mr. Arifari underlined the important role played by Niger within the OIC and in the region.

The audience was also an occasion to discuss developments in the political and security situation in the West African sub-region and the need to join efforts between OIC and ECOWAS in this regard.

OIC and ECOWAS Discuss Cooperation

On 7 March 2022, at ECOWAS Headquarters, in Abuja, the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the President of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Mr. Jean Claude Kassi Brou, received a high-level delegation of the General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), led by Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Ambassador Yousef bin Mohamed Aldobaey.

During this meeting, the Assistant Secretary-General underscored the special importance the OIC attaches to the region and its keenness to ensure its peace, security and stability. He also expressed his appreciation of the earnest efforts by ECOWAS in this regard.



Libyan Ramadan Atmosphere has Special Character

Tripoli, Ashraf Al-Azabi (DPA)- If you arrive in a Libyan city early in the morning and found roads and squares quasi-deserted, then Ramadan has come. Usually, even schools stop during Ramadan, says a power lines maintenance worker.

The habit has persisted, or has been entrenched, as it seems, even with the lunar year cycle, and Ramadan arriving in spring. The best time to quickly cross a usually congested street is still Ramadan mornings.

Before noon, the rituals of the month start to take form. Then, one can believe that about 2 million people live in Tripoli. Markets and shops are open, the streets are crowded, and everyone on their way heading for something that is likely connected to the month of fasting.

Most of the crowds are concentrated in the vegetable and meat markets. The Libyan kitchen in Ramadan does not dispense with fresh local produce, such as onions, potatoes, tomatoes, dill, parsley, peppers, lemons, chard, arugula, lettuce, dates, oranges and strawberries.

Usually, cattle and beef meat and canned food top the lists of purchases in Ramadan, as well as fresh fish for coastal residents, in addition to milk and dairy products. However, the global food crisis resulting from the war in Ukraine has greatly impacted the economy of Libya, which depends almost entirely on oil exports, with the exception of vegetable and fruit cultivation, livestock and poultry farming, as well as canneries. The general total of food production amounts to 10% of local consumption. According to the statement of the Head of the Libyan Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture, Mr. Muhammad Al-Raid, to (DAP): "All those factors pushed up prices in an unprecedented manner. Also, traders increased the prices before Ramadan as usual, which made

the government intervene and urgently disburse children and non-working wives grants."

One of the Libyan women, Ms. Najat Al-Taher, said, "Libya has become accustomed to predicaments. With or without the crisis, the rituals of Ramadan will continue with whatever is available. Men try to buy the best products with the money available, and women are always diligent in using whatever available in their kitchens to prepare the most delicious meals, or at least, the best meals that relieve the hunger and provide energy."

In addition to the usual Mediterranean dishes in Ramadan, such as soups, borek, pizza, kebabs, kofta, etc., Libyans prefer local dishes such as: Al-Mubatan (crispy potatoes covered with meat), osban, dholama, mbakbaka, couscous, bazin, ftat, haraimi (fish soup), rice, as well as all kinds of tajins.

Libyans crave sweets in Ramadan, especially the Tripoli baklava, zal-abya, Al-asla, lokmat Al-qadi, basbousa, kunafa and maqroud.

With all these foods, nothing can burn all these calories except movement. Hence, all sports arenas get filled in the afternoon and at night with people practicing various activities, such as walking, jogging and exercising. Usually, most neighborhoods organize football leagues, to which teams from other neighborhoods are invited to participate. The fame of some Ramadan leagues exceeded the official competitions organized by Sport Federation, and some of them were even the cause of the fame of great players such as "Tariq Al-Ta'eb", and others. It was also the reason for the formation of the Libyan five-a-side football national team, which won Arab and African championships.

With the approach of the Maghrib call to prayer, begins what Libyans jokingly call the «sherpa race» or the race to soup.



“Arabic Calligraphy” an Art that Arouses the Interest of Western Artists

Cairo- Hajjaj Salama: People in the past as well as in the present have unanimously agreed that Arabic calligraphy is a creative art that no nation or civilization has mastered or taken care of like Arabs and Muslims, to the extent that it turned it from a means of knowledge into an art that adorns books, poems collections, walls and ceilings of mosques and huge buildings.

In his book, “Dictionary of Arabic Calligraphy and Calligraphers Terms”, Dr. Afif Al-Bahansi says that Arabic calligraphy is the creative art that crowned Arab civilization and other Islamic civilizations. It is different from the other calligraphies, for it transcends its first mission, i.e. conveying the meaning, to an aesthetic mission that has become an end in itself. Thus, Arabic calligraphy became an independent art. It owes this to its association with an amazing content that Arabs and Muslims have believed in its rhetorical eloquent inimitability, which is the Holy Qur’an.

The art of Arabic calligraphy and its aesthetic values gained the attention of Western artists. Also, Arab calligraphers have been able to keep pace with artistic modernity. This has been possible because of the emergence of a generation of creative calligraphers who have preserved the origins of Arabic calligraphy, and worked to spread it until it became on the lists of calligraphies today. These artists speak different languages and belong to different cultures, such as the Chinese, the Italian, and even the Polish, etc. They mastered the art of Arabic calligraphy, and excelled in presenting impressive works of art, defying all that is raised about the risks facing the art of Arabic calligraphy because of the spread of digitization and the use of computers to realize works of Arabic calligraphy. Hence, we can say that the art of Arabic calligraphy has succeeded in overcoming many challenges, and has become one of the plastic arts that attract art lovers of different races and cultures.

Calligraphers in the Arab and Islamic worlds have become so artful that any modification, development or addition a licensed calligrapher makes in Arabic calligraphy becomes a base for his students and a school for his followers, which led to the rise in the number of calligraphy schools.



Dr. Salim AlMalik, Director-General of the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO), and Dr. Ines Abdel-Dayem, Minister of Culture of the Arab Republic of Egypt, proclaimed Cairo as Capital of Culture in the Islamic World for 2022, during a press conference held at the Cairo Opera House on Tuesday 7 December 2021. In her statement, Dr. Ines Abdel-Dayem expressed her delight at the choice of Cairo as Capital of Culture in the Islamic World for 2022, emphasizing that this proclamation affirms the symbolic value held by the city. She also added that Cairo is a long-standing crossroads of cultures and a hub for creativity, thought and arts. She also underlined that the city's landmarks and monuments reflect different aspects of the human civilization in general and the Islamic heritage in particular.

Dr. Ines Abdel-Dayem commended ICESCO's implementation of its distinguished programme of Celebration of Islamic World Culture Capitals (CIWCC) and its efforts to harness all effective mechanisms and methods to promote relationship among these capitals. The Egyptian minister highlighted that communication will be established with the officials in charge of the celebration programme of Rabat as Capital of Culture in the

Islamic World for 2022, through ICESCO, to coordinate and share the celebration activities and programmes between Egypt and Morocco. She also underlined the importance of these celebrations in providing a true portrayal of the Islamic civilization and promoting coexistence, tolerance, and communication among peoples.

She pointed out that the celebration programme of Cairo as Capital of Culture in the Islamic World, to be launched next mid-February, will last throughout the year, and will include a rich programme prepared by the various departments of the Ministry of Culture in coordination with ICESCO.

In his statement, Dr. Salim AlMalik, Director-General of ICESCO, emphasized the importance of intensifying efforts and harnessing all capacities to promote cooperation and coordination for the celebration of Cairo as Capital of Culture in the Islamic World for 2022 and raising this event to the level befitting the status of this ancient historical and cultural capital.

Also, he underlined that the celebration of Cairo as Capital of Culture in the Islamic world was scheduled for 2020, but was postponed due to the exceptional circumstances imposed by the COVID- 19 pandemic. In the same connection, he explained that

this forced postponement allowed for the reviewing and development of the initial celebration programme, as well as for its enrichment with more cultural and artistic activities and programmes. It also allowed for enlarging the circle of local and regional partners and benefiting from the new developmental amendments introduced by ICESCO to the Programme of Celebration of Islamic World Culture Capitals (CIWCC), he emphasized.

Dr. AlMalik praised the cultural and civilizational assets that Cairo has and which make it worthy of being a capital of culture in the Islamic world, notably its abundant tangible, intangible and natural heritage. He also underlined that the city represents a major meeting point of various civilizations and an open world heritage museum displaying several ancient and modern monuments, from different eras. He also emphasized that the city headquarters numerous cultural institutions and hosts some of the most prominent cultural festivals and events, book fairs, and theatrical performances. It also has cultural and innovation facilities where intellectuals do their activities.

Celebration of Cairo as Capital of Culture in the Islamic World is part of ICESCO's Programme of Celebration of Islamic World Culture Capitals (CIWCC)

OIC Valued KSA-UAE Initiative to Provide \$ 3B in Aid

OIC Welcomes Establishment of Presidential Council of Yemen



The Organization of Islamic Cooperation followed the events and developments that took place in Yemen, and expressed its stances about those developments accordingly. In this context, it welcomed the swearing-in of H.E. Mr. Rashad Muhammad Al-Alimi, President of the Yemeni Presidential Leadership Council, and members of the Council, who took oath before the Parliament in its session held on 19 April 2022, in Aden, the interim capital of Yemen. On this occasion, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Houssein Ibrahim Taha, extended his sincere congratulations to the President, the members of the Presidential Leadership Council and to the Yemeni people, wishing the Council success in its historic mission.

The Secretary-General affirmed that the OIC General Secretariat was optimistic about the establishment of the Council that bodes well as an important achievement that would open new horizons for a peaceful solution and a new stage in the history of Yemen.

The OIC Secretary-General indicated that the Yemeni people are looking forward to the efforts that the Presidential Leadership Council will exert at various levels to put an end to the Yemeni crisis, achieve security, stability, and economic and social development in order to alleviate the suffering of the Yemenis, underlining that these efforts require all support and encouragement.

The OIC Secretary General valued the KSA-

UAE initiative to provide \$ 3B as urgent aid to the Yemeni economy.

The OIC General Secretariat welcomed the announcement by the UN Special Envoy for Yemen, Hans Grundberg, of the agreement

The General Secretariat reiterated its appreciation of the efforts by the UN and its Special Envoy to Yemen, and expressed its hope that the truce will alleviate the suffering of the Yemeni people

of the parties to the conflict to extend the current truce in Yemen for a period of two months, whereby all forms of military operations inside Yemen and across the border will be halted.

The General Secretariat reiterated its appreciation of the efforts by the UN and its Special Envoy to Yemen, and expressed its hope that the truce will alleviate the suffering of the Yemeni people, create the conditions conducive to de-escalation and sustainable political solution to the conflict in Yemen,

and achieve security, peace and stability in Yemen and in the region.

In a speech delivered at the opening of the Yemeni-Yemeni consultations in Riyadh, at the invitation of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC), H.E. Mr. Houssein Ibrahim Taha, the OIC Secretary-General, valued the GCC's initiative, which shows once again its keenness to find a solution to the Yemeni crisis.

The OIC Secretary-General recalled the OIC's principled position. He asserted that the OIC has committed itself to support Yemen's unity, sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity, refused any interference in its internal affairs and called for an end to the suffering of its people and a political solution to the conflict.

The General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation welcomed the initiative by the Gulf Cooperation Council to host Yemeni-Yemeni consultations in the Saudi capital Riyadh, end of this month.

The Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Houssein Ibrahim Taha, commended the initiative as a way to heal the rift between the Yemenis. He called on all Yemeni parties to join in this very important initiative to stop bloodshed in Yemen and reach a political solution to the conflict, in such a manner as to preserve the interests of the Yemeni people and bolster security and stability in the region.

On 1 March 2022, the OIC General Secretariat welcomed the UN Security Council Resolution 2624 (2022) calling the Houthis, under Chapter VII, a "terrorist group".

The General Secretariat expressed hope that the Security Council resolution will bring a halt to the terrorist acts of the Houthi militia and its supporters. Not only will this designation help neutralize the threat posed by the Houthis, but it will also cut off supplies of rockets, drones, major arms and money flow, used by this militia to target the Yemeni people, international maritime navigation and neighboring countries, the General Secretariat argued.

The OIC General Secretariat also reiterated its support for efforts to find an inclusive political solution to the Yemeni crisis, based on the GCC Initiative and its Executive Mechanism.

OIC Delegation Discusses Cooperation with Iraqi Prime Minister

The Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq, H.E. Mr. Mustafa Al-Kadhimi, received, in the Iraqi capital, Baghdad, a delegation of the OIC General Secretariat led by the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Ambassador, Yousef Bin Mohamed Aldobaey.

During this meeting, both sides underscored the importance of enhancing cooperation between the Republic of Iraq and the OIC in various fields and discussed ways for its promotion. They also exchanged views on major issues of common interest and the efforts made by the OIC to advance the causes of the Islamic Ummah and promote security, peace and development in the Member States. The delegation also held meetings with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and other Iraqi senior officials.



OIC Secretary-General Affirms his Support for UAE in Face of Houthi Aggression

The Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Mr. Houssein Brahim Taha, made an official visit to the United Arab Emirates, and met the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr. Khalifa Shaheen Al-Marar, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. During this meeting, the Secretary-General commended the support of the UAE and its leadership for the role of the OIC and its work. He also praised the UAE continuous support for the Member States in their quest for development, and expressed hope for further support from the UAE to help many of these countries tackle the challenges they face. For his part, the UAE Minister of State, H.E. Mr. Khalifa Shaheen Al-Marar, reaffirmed his country's support for the OIC, while commending the role it plays with regard to various issues of concern to the Muslim world. The two sides shared views on Islamic issues, such as the Palestinian cause, the situation in Afghanistan, Yemen, the Sahel region, and Libya. They also reviewed the status of Muslim communities and minorities in non-Member States and exchanged perspectives on other issues related to the combat against extremism, terrorism, and Islamophobia. They also stressed the importance of promoting dialogue, communication, tolerance,

and moderation among world peoples. Reiterating his condemnation of the vicious attacks launched by the Houthi militias on the United Arab Emirates, the Secretary-General stressed that the OIC stands in support of the UAE in all its actions to protect its territory, its citizens, and its residents. The terrorist Houthi militia launched a series of attacks on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. In this regard, the OIC unequivocally confirmed its firm position in condemning those attacks in the strongest terms, in its media coverage, in its magazine, since last January. On 17 January 2022, the OIC issued its statement, condemning in the strongest terms, the terrorist attack that targeted Abu Dhabi airport, and renewed its strong condemnation and denunciation of the ballistic attack carried out by the Houthi militia on Saudi and Emirati civilian areas. The coalition forces supporting legitimacy in Yemen along with the UAE armed forces were able to thwart such attack. On 1 February 2022, the OIC General Secretariat condemned in the strongest terms the launch of a ballistic missile by the Houthi terrorist militia towards the United Arab Emirates. The Militia carried out another attack on the 11th of the same month. The

OIC strongly condemned and denounced the repeated hostilities of the Houthi militia against the territory of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and condemned in the strongest terms the attempt of the Houthi militia to target Abha airport with a (booby-trapped) drone, which the Saudi defense forces were able to intercept and thwart. The Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, H.E. Mr. Houssein Brahim Taha, condemned in the strongest terms this criminal act committed by the Houthi militia, and its repeated attacks against lands and civilians in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in violation of international laws and norms. On 11 March 2022, the General Secretariat condemned in the strongest terms the cowardly attack by a drone targeting the oil refinery in Riyadh. The attack was repeated on the 20th of the same month. The OIC expressed its strong condemnation of the attacks perpetrated by the Houthi militia targeting civilians and vital economic facilities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. On the same day, the OIC expressed its strong condemnation of the continued hostile attacks of the Houthi militias on Saudi lands and its economic facilities, which targeted, in the evening of March 20th, Aramco petroleum products distribution station in Jeddah.



OIC and AFAD Sign Cooperation Framework Agreement Consultation Meeting between OIC and EU to Discuss Humanitarian Issues

The OIC Humanitarian Affairs Department held a consultation meeting with the Department for humanitarian aid and civil protection (DG ECHO), on 10 February 2022, at European Commission Headquarters, in Brussels.

The OIC General Secretariat was represented at the meeting by a delegation headed by H.E. Ambassador Tarig Ali Bakheet, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian, Social and Cultural Affairs, and comprised OIC Permanent Observer to the EU, Amb. Ismat Jahan. The EU was represented at the meeting by DG ECHO Deputy Director-General, Dr. Michael Köhler.

The two sides exchanged views on ways to enhance coordination between the OIC and the EU in areas of mutual humanitarian concern.

The discussions on main humanitarian policy and operational priorities for 2022 focused on humanitarian activities in Afghanistan, the Sahel, in the Horn of Africa and the Middle East, as well as on humanitarian activities for Rohingya Muslims.

The two sides examined prospects for promoting humanitarian cooperation in specific regions and emphasized the importance of continued coordination in that regard.

The OIC Delegation also visited the Emergency Response Coordination Centre

(ERCC) of DG ECHO.

At the end of their meeting, the two sides decided to further explore the possibility to formalize the relations between the two Humanitarian institutions.

As part of a working visit performed in Ankara, on 17-18 February 2022, by an Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) General Secretariat's delegation headed by H.E. Ambassador Tarig Ali Bakheet, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian, Social and Cultural Affairs, a bilateral cooperation framework agreement was signed between the OIC and the Disaster and Emergency Management Authority of the Republic of Turkey (AFAD), on 17 February 2022, at the AFAD Headquarters.

The framework cooperation agreement covers important issues ranging from capacity building in disaster management to experience-sharing and humanitarian assistance to OIC Member States affected by conflicts and natural disasters.

Within the framework of the visit, the OIC delegation also held important meetings with senior officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, the President of the Turkish International Cooperation Agency (TIKA) and the President of the Turkish Red Crescent (Kizilay).

OIC Secretary-General Welcomes Donation by Nigeria to Humanitarian Trust Fund for Afghanistan

The Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, expressed his appreciation to the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and commended the generous donation of one million dollars it made to the Humanitarian Trust Fund for Afghanistan.

The Secretary-General underlined that this donation came in time to add a new momentum to OIC's efforts to contribute to easing the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan and to help in catering for the needs of millions of Afghan people, including women and children.

He also underscored that the OIC remains committed to the noble cause of supporting the Afghan people and will spare no effort in fully implementing the special resolution on Afghanistan issued by the last extraordinary session of the Council of Foreign Ministers, held in December 2021, in Islamabad, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Meets the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia

Secretary-General's Special Envoy Holds Talks in Kabul to Follow up on Implementation of December Meeting's Resolution

H.E. Ambassador Tarig Ali Bakheet, Special Envoy of the OIC Secretary-General, held talks with H.E. Mr. Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi, acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of the de facto authorities in Afghanistan. The meeting was attended by Dr. Mohamed Alayach, head of the OIC office in Kabul.

The meeting discussed the efforts made by OIC to follow up the implementation of the resolution issued by the extraordinary session of the Council of Foreign Ministers, held in Islamabad, in December 2021.

During his visit to Kabul, the OIC Secretary-General Special Envoy, Amb. Tarig Ali Bakheet, discussed with the United Nations Secretary-General Special Representative in Afghanistan, H.E. Ms. Deborah Lyons, joint cooperation to support Afghanistan, on 9 March 2022, at the UN premises in Kabul. The two sides stressed the need to strengthen their partnership to address the daunting humanitarian and development challenges facing Afghanistan.

Within the framework of the interest the OIC takes in the situation in Afghanistan, and as part of its efforts to follow up on the implementation of the outcomes of the Extraordinary Ministerial Meeting held in Islamabad, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, last December, the Director General of the OIC office in Afghanistan, Dr. Mohamed Alayach, assumed office in the Afghan capital, Kabul, on Wednesday 4 March 2022.

The OIC office in Kabul coordinates the OIC's humanitarian efforts with Afghanistan and international partners. It will be provided with human and material resources, in con-



formity with the resolution adopted by the Extraordinary Ministerial Conference on the Situation in Afghanistan. This is to enable it to fulfil its obligations to support the Afghan people in various fields.

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, H.E. Retno L.P. Marsudi, received on 1 March 2022, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, the Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian, Social, and Cultural Affairs and Special Envoy for Afghanistan, Ambassador Tarig Ali Bakheet. The Special Envoy delivered a written message from OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha.

The Secretary-General praised the important role played by Indonesia as a founding member of the OIC, which has been supporting the Organization and contributing to the enhancement of the joint Islamic action among OIC Member States.

The meeting discussed the latest developments related to the implementation of the Resolution on the Humanitarian Situation in Afghanistan, adopted by the 17th Extraordinary Session of the OIC Council of Foreign

Ministers, held on 19 December 2021, in Islamabad.

The two sides exchanged views on the measures taken by OIC to implement the resolution especially the Humanitarian Trust Fund and women's access to education.

H.E. Ms. Marsudi expressed the willingness of Indonesia to support the work of OIC Special Envoy and stressed the importance of women empowerment in Afghanistan.

Also, Ambassador Tarig Ali Bakheet paid a visit to the Secretary-General of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), H.E. Mr. Dato' Lim Jok Hoi. Ambassador Tarig Ali Bakheet commended the active role of ASEAN in promoting economic integration as well as political and security cooperation among its Member States.

For his part, ASEAN Secretary-General welcomed the opportunity to explore cooperation possibilities between the two organizations in areas of common interest, including sharing of best practices and expertise in mutually beneficial sectors, particularly in the humanitarian and economic Affairs.



OIC Demands Kabul Authorities to Take Firm Stance against Terrorist Attacks

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) condemned the series of terrorist attacks in Afghanistan throughout the month of April, which targeted a mosque in Mazar-i-Sharif on 21 April, in addition to the powerful bombing that targeted the “Khalifa Sahib Mosque” in the west of the Afghan capital, Kabul, on the 29th of the same month, and the April 19th double bombing of a children’s school in Kabul.

The General Secretariat reaffirms the steadfast position of the OIC supporting Afghanistan in its fight against all forms of terrorism, bringing perpetrators of terrorist acts to justice and holding them accountable.

The General Secretariat underlined that combating terrorism in Afghanistan is a key requisite for the political stabilization of the country, without which hardly any social or economic development could be achieved.

The despicable attack marks yet another carnage in a string of attacks on Afghan civilians in the holy month of Ramadan, and just days before the celebration of Eid Al-Fitr.

These repeated and indiscriminate attacks, the OIC General Secretariat underscored, reflect the unabated volatility of the security situation in Afghanistan, calling for a more resolute stand by the de facto authorities against whoever sponsors or orchestrates

them.

The OIC expressed its unwavering solidarity with Afghanistan and its long-suffering people, and expressed its deepest sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims and a speedy and full recovery to those who were injured.

Relatedly, the OIC General Secretariat condemned, in the strongest terms, the terrorist bombing that tore through a mosque in Peshawar, in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, on Friday 4 March 2022, killing and injuring tens of worshipers.

H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, the OIC Secretary-General, expressed his strong condemnation of this heinous crime and offered his sincere condolences to the victims’ families as well as to the government and people of Pakistan, wishing a speedy recovery to the injured. The Secretary-General affirmed the OIC’s support for the Pakistani government in confronting terrorism, stressing the OIC’s firm stance against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

The Secretary-General made a phone call to H.E. the ex- Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Dr. Shah Mahmood Qureshi, to present his condolences for the victims of the terrorist bombing.

Terrorism in Africa

The Republic of Mali witnessed three terrorist attacks over the months of January, March and April. In this connection, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) condemned vehemently the deadly terrorist attack that claimed the lives of seven Mauritanian citizens in the Nara region in the Republic of Mali. The OIC Secretary-General also expressed his strong condemnation of the bloody terrorist attack that targeted a military compound for the Malian army in the center of the country last March, killing at least 27 people and injuring a number of others.

The Secretary-General described the attack as heinous and unacceptable, and expressed the Organization’s solidarity with the government and people of Mali in this painful time, expressing his condolences and sympathy to the families of the victims of this tragedy, wishing a speedy recovery for the injured.

In April, H.E. Mr. Hussein Ibrahim Taha denounced, in the strongest terms, the three terrorist attacks on military centers in Séfari, Pavo and Nyono in Mali, killing six people and injuring 20 others.



OIC Stresses its Firm Stance Condemning Terrorism

The General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) followed the security situation in the Member States of the Organization throughout the period covered by this issue of the Journal, in January, February, March and April 2022. At the beginning of this year, the General Secretariat of the Organization expressed its strong condemnation of the attacks committed by armed bandits on villages in Zamfara State, in the Federal Republic of Nigeria, which reportedly resulted in the killing of dozens of people. The General Secretariat expressed its sincere condolences to the families of the victims as well as to the government and people of Nigeria, wishing the injured a speedy recovery. At the same time, the OIC affirmed its solidarity with Nigeria in its efforts to combat terrorism, and urged the Nigerian authorities to spare no effort to bring those responsible for this atrocity to justice.

The Republic of Burkina Faso witnessed two terrorist incidents in March and April. In this connection, the OIC General Secretariat expressed its strong condemnation of the armed attack that targeted security elements in northern Burkina Faso, killing many of them.

The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, described the attack as heinous and offered his condolences to the families

of the victims as well as to the government and people of Burkina Faso. He also reiterated the Organization's solidarity and support for Burkina Faso in the fight against terrorism.

On a similar note, he condemned, in the strongest terms, the terrorist acts against a military center last April in northern Burkina Faso, which left about ten people dead and a number of others wounded.

Attacks in Arab Countries

Somalia witnessed several consecutive attacks in January, February and March. The General Secretariat strongly condemned the terrorist attack that targeted Mogadishu airport, which resulted in several casualties. It also condemned the two terrorist bombings that took place in the town of Beledweyne in central Somalia. The first targeted a female MP who was seeking re-election in the current parliament, while the second targeted the vicinity of a hospital there, which led to dozens of casualties. The Secretary-General offered his condolences to the families of the victims as well as to the government and people of Somalia, wishing a speedy recovery for the injured.

The Organization also strongly condemned two suicide attacks that targeted two army centers on the outskirts of Mogadishu, which resulted in several casualties.

The General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation also strongly condemned the terrorist bombing that took place in the Somali capital Mogadishu, which led to the death and injury of a number of Somali citizens. The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, expressed his strong condemnation of this heinous operation. He offered his condolences to the families of the victims as well as to the government and people of Somalia, wishing a speedy recovery for the injured.

The Secretary-General reiterated the OIC's condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and its support for the Somali government's efforts to confront and combat it.

The OIC General Secretariat followed up, with great concern, the developments in the Republic of Iraq and condemned, in the strongest terms, the terrorist attack in the Karma district of Anbar Governorate. The Secretary-General stressed that this attack is a terrorist act targeting the unity, security and stability of Iraq.

The Secretary-General also stressed the need to preserve the security, safety, stability and territorial integrity of the Republic of Iraq, calling on all political actors in Iraq to calm down and adopt dialogue to overcome the difficulties their country is going through.

OIC and UN Cooperate on Election Observation

Within the framework of cooperation and coordination in the field of election observation, a virtual ordinary meeting was held on 2 March 2022 between the OIC General Secretariat, represented by its Election Observation Unit, and the United Nations General Secretariat, represented by United Nations Electoral Assistance Division (UNEAD), coming under the ongoing efforts by the OIC to enhance its capacity in the field.

During the meeting, the joint Plan of Action for Cooperation and Partnership in the Area of Elections and Election Observation was reviewed. The meeting also discussed the road map and the prospects of cooperation in 2022. The OIC General Secretariat commended UNEAD's continuous support of and fruitful cooperation with the Election Observation Unit. It also expressed its aspiration to supporting cooperation with leading international and regional organizations on elections and election observation. The OIC congratulated the government and people of the Republic of Turkmenistan on the good conduct of the presidential elections of 12 March 2022. Commending the elections, Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, said that the process was transparent, nationalistic and professionally run. He also praised the people of Turkmenistan, who voted in large numbers, displaying a high sense of responsibility and affirming their determination and keenness to contribute to the consolidation of democracy in their country. The Secretary-General wished Turkmenistan continued progress, prosperity and success on its course to build a better future for its people and project a positive image as a leading Muslim nation.

For the record, the General Secretariat had sent a panel of experts to observe presidential elections in Turkmenistan, at the invitation of the Central Election Commission.

A delegation of observers of the OIC General Secretariat also participated in the observation of the local elections in the State of Palestine that took place on 26 March 2022. The OIC's mission held a meeting with the head of the Central Elections Committee, during which it was briefed on the conduct of the elections, and the relations of cooperation between the two sides in the field of elections. The delegation stressed the importance that the OIC attaches to observing elections in the Member States, based on the relevant provisions contained in its Charter and the resolutions of the Summit and the Council of Foreign Ministers.

The General Secretariat held the second training session for the Election Observation Unit under the title: (Enhancing Election Observation), at its Headquarters, in Jeddah, on 30-31 January 2022. At the opening of the session, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, addressed the participants in a speech, delivered on his behalf by the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Ambassador Yusuf Al Dobeay, in which he underlined that the Organization has been observing elections, based on its mission to serve Member States.

In the same connection, he highlighted that the session will include a number of subjects related to the role of observers, types of voting, stages of the observation process, the legal framework for electoral management and the Organization's missions participating in election observation. By the end of the session, which was aimed at building the capacities of General Secretariat observers, who participate in election observation missions, the number of General Secretariat observers reached more than 65 employees. This session aimed also at improving and developing the observers' performance during their missions of observing elections.



Sharjah Develops Children's Creativity through the "Biggest Festival" for Children's Literature

Sharjah - Shaymaa Yahya – (DPA): On these days every year, the Emirate of Sharjah, in the United Arab Emirates, organizes the biggest Arab festival to motivate children to read, delve into the seas of culture, and develop their skills in storytelling and literary creativity. Sharjah Children's Reading Festival (SCRF), a major cultural celebration, bringing together children with eminent and creative writers, literary figures and authors, will be held over the course of 11 days.

The Festival is held annually under the patronage and support of the Ruler of Sharjah, H.H. Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al-Qasimi. It attracts thousands of Emirati children as well as the children of Arab, European and Asian residents in the United Arab Emirates, to create a carnival of different cultures from different parts of the world.

Throughout the Festival, a series of intellectual sessions and creative workshops are held, in which writers and creators from all over the world participate. Participants include people that have dedicated their lives to serving children and building their intellectual personalities, in addition to a distinguished group of cultural institutions, intellectual organizations, public libraries, publishing houses, distributors, booksellers, electronic publishers, copyright agents, and producers

of educational multimedia.

The 13th session of the Festival was held on the theme of "Create Creativity", and saw the participation of 139 publishing houses from 15 Arab and foreign countries.

This year, the Festival invited a host of Arab and foreign stars and eminent creators, including the Egyptian star Mohamed Henedy, who presented many literary works for children, and the famous American film director and painter Kyle Balda. Also, a concert presented by the composer, singer and composer of children's songs, Tariq Al-Arabi Tariqan, accompanied by his children, was organized during the Festival.

The list of Festival guests also included a number of Emirati and Arab writers, creators and media professionals, most notably writer Omar Taher, writer Hadil Ghoneim, novelist Essam Youssef, writer Fadia Daas, writer Muhammad Shaker Garg, and painter Intilaq Muhammed Ali.

During the current session, more than 1900 events, including theatre activities, creative workshops, artistic performances and discussions, presented by creators and artists from around the world, were organized. They comprised 1140 activities for children, 120 cultural activities, and 130 artistic and theatrical performances, in addition to other

events such as the social networking station, which received 8 social media influencers and content creators to participate in 25 various events and workshops.

The Festival included an interactive exhibition entitled "The Robot Zoo", showcasing 8 robotic animals and 15 interactive activities, through which children learn about the characteristics of animals, the details of their lives and the mechanism of their bodies.

The Festival organized the "Comic Story Station", which included more than 100 segments, in which a host of artists and creators participated. The Festival allocated a pavilion called "The Little Explorers Corner" for children from 3 to 5 years old, to enjoy 264 creative and interactive activities.

The Festival included the annual Poetry Knight competition and the Sharjah Children's Book Illustration Exhibition, whose program included the presentation of 23 art workshops, with the participation of 296 painters from 48 Arab and foreign countries, in addition to the Children's Book Makers Platform "Horizon", in which more than 50 Emirati, Arab and foreign publishing houses and painters from 12 countries participated. During the Festival, the Expo Exhibition Center in Sharjah is transformed into an open space for the imagination of children and the youth.

OIC Meeting to Discuss Convention on the Rights of the Child, Observes a Minute of Silence for Rayan's Soul



The participants in the Open-ended Intergovernmental Group of Experts meeting to discuss the draft of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Convention on the Rights of the Child in Islam, observed a minute of silence for the Moroccan boy Rayan who died after being trapped in a well. Participants also noted the strenuous efforts made by the authorities in the Kingdom of Morocco to save the child.

During the meeting, which was held at the Headquarters of the OIC General Secretariat, on 6 February 2022, the OIC General Secretariat offered its sincere condolences to the Kingdom of Morocco and the family of the boy Rayan, praying Allah the Almighty to grant his family forbearance and consolation.

For the record, Rayan had died of suffocation in a deep well, in an incident that shook the world and attracted people's sympathy. The crisis lasted for days and ended with the exhumation of the child's body from the well.

The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, in his speech delivered on his behalf by Ambassador Tarig Ali Bakheet, the

OIC Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian, Cultural and Social Affairs, said that the meeting was being held in implementation of the resolution of the Council of Foreign Ministers adopted at its 47th session, held in November 2020 in Niamey, which called on the General Secretariat to hold a meeting of a group of experts to discuss and finalize the draft OIC Convention on the Rights of the Child in Islam, which was prepared by the Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC) upon the request of the Council of Foreign Ministers. H.E. the Secretary-General said that the meeting aimed to discuss and enrich the Draft OIC Convention on the Rights of the Child in Islam with the aim of finalizing it to be subsequently submitted to the Council of Foreign Ministers for approval.

The OIC Secretary-General drew attention to the challenges facing the world today in the field of child protection and care, as a result of the deteriorating security and humanitarian conditions and highlighted the importance of intensifying cooperation between Member States and the consequent need to give children protection issues the

attention they deserve. The Secretary-General affirmed his confidence that the meeting will be crowned with success and reach outcomes that contribute to enriching and finalizing the draft convention.

The speech expressed the hope that the Draft OIC Convention on the Rights of the Child in Islam would contribute to the provision of effective and reliable social services for them, as called for by the Organization's Programme of Action 2025 and the relevant decisions of the Organization.

It should be noted that the Islamic Summit Conference, at its seventh regular session, held in December 1994 in Casablanca, in the Kingdom of Morocco, approved the Declaration on the Rights and Protection of the Child in Islam. It was also approved by the Council of Foreign Ministers at its thirty-first session held in June 2004, in Istanbul, Republic of Turkey, under the name "Covenant on the Rights of the Child in Islam." More than 17 years after the adoption of the Covenant, only two countries have ratified it, while its entry into force requires the ratification of 10 countries.

OIC Observes Day of Muslim Orphan

On the occasion of the Day of the Muslim Orphan, which falls on the fifteenth of Ramadan each year, the General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) held on Monday 17 Ramadan 1442 corresponding to 18 April 2022, a virtual symposium, as part of a series of periodic intellectual and cultural symposia and lectures held by the General Secretariat of the Organization, in order to promote and develop cultural content.

The symposium reviewed the efforts exerted in a number of Member States by displaying video clips portraying the Islamic world's interest in orphans and their issues, and highlighting the efforts exerted in taking care of them, sponsoring them, and preserving their rights. Dr. Muhammad Mustafa Shuaib, Head of Studies and Fatwas Department at the International Islamic Fiqh Academy, commented on those clips. It is worth noting that Dr. Shuaib holds a PhD in Sharia, law, comparative jurisprudence and fundamentals of jurisprudence, and has participated in the arbitration of research papers, fora, conferences and scientific journals. He has also chaired and participated as a juror in a number of competitions of the International Organization for Memorization of the Holy Qur'an. He has written more than 40 research papers and books. He is a member of a number of scientific organizations and institutions. He has a number of scientific posts, articles and press interviews in a number of magazines, local newspapers, and websites.

The symposium shed light on the legal aspects related to orphans' issues, their most prominent rights, and aspects of their care. It also dealt with a number of professional and legislative aspects related to orphans' issues, and unifying efforts to set optimal standards for the care and protection of orphaned chil-



dren in the Muslim world. It also highlighted the current situation in the Muslim world, in light of the various repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic, disasters and conflicts in some Member States and their repercussions on orphans, and the most important recommendations.

The Muslim world observes on 15 Ramadan every year the Day of the Muslim Orphan. The Council of Foreign Ministers of the Member States, in its 40th session, held in Conakry, Republic of Guinea, in December 2013, passed a resolution marking the fifteenth day of Ramadan of each year as an orphan day in the Islamic world to raise awareness of their issues and needs.

The observance of this day comes under exceptional circumstances requiring a different approach to ensure comprehensive care and sponsorship for orphans. More efforts are needed in this regard especially in light of the various repercussions of the COVID-19, disasters and conflicts in some OIC Member States. In more than one place in the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet, Islam has urged us to give orphans the best treatment, to sponsor and take care of them in regards to their education, health, social life and living conditions, to preserve their rights, and to raise them well.

As an expression of the OIC interest in this cherished category of the society and their issues and concerns, the OIC General Secretariat renewed its invitation to all Member States and humanitarian organizations to carry out appropriate activities to serve the causes of orphans.

OIC Secretary-General Participates in World Youth Forum

The Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, participated in the inaugural ceremony of the Fourth Edition of the World Youth Forum (WYF), held in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, on 10 January 2022, under the auspices of the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, H.E. Mr. Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, and in his presence.

The World Youth Forum is an annual global event in Sharm El-Sheikh, on the eastern coast of the Arab Republic of Egypt, and which aims to bring together the youth of the world to promote dialogue and discuss development issues.



مجلس التعاون الإسلامي
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INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY
ONE OF THE PRIORITIES OF THE OIC
SUPPORTING THE ROLE OF WOMEN
IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

On International Women's Day: Secretary General Underlines Importance of Women's Empowerment in all Fields

On the International Women's Day, celebrated yearly on 8 March, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, the OIC Secretary-General, emphasized the attention the OIC pays to women's issues and empowerment, considering the difficulties and challenges they face to obtain their rights, guaranteed by international systems. This attention, H.E. the Secretary-General highlighted, is based on the OIC's conviction that enhancing the role of women in the comprehensive and sustainable development process requires taking concrete measures to ensure their effective participation at various levels, in leadership and decision-making roles.

On this important global occasion, held this year on the theme of "Gender Equality Today for a Sustainable Tomorrow", the Secretary-General sent a message of congratulations to women in the Islamic world and worldwide, for all their achievements in all fields, especially for their tremendous efforts in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic as doctors, nurses, as well as public health and social care workers. H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha paid a special tribute to the Palestinian woman, praising her efforts in standing up to the Israeli occupation forces and the continued support she provides to her family and society to adhere to unity to confront the practices of oppression and violence perpetrated by the Israeli occupation forces. The Secretary-General also saluted women in Afghanistan, emphasizing their right to education and job opportunities to achieve peace, stability, and comprehensive development in Afghanistan.

The Secretary-General pointed out that today, in light of the climate crisis and the challenges facing the world to reduce the risks of climate, environmental, health, and war disasters, which have the most significant impact on the most vulnerable groups in societies, including women who face poverty and depend on natural resources affected particularly by climate to support their families and children, or even working women forced to quit their jobs or educational opportunities to take care of their families during periods of disaster or quarantine to address COVID-19 and its successive variants, and were subsequently subjected to escalating levels of domestic violence, all of these challenges, he highlighted, push us to empower women and girls to amplify their voices and participate in taking decisions related to climate change and to address all disasters.

In this context, the Secretary-General affirmed that the OIC would take adequate measures to empower women, enhance their conditions and prohibit discrimination against them in OIC Member States. In addition to the objectives of the OIC-2025 Programme of Action geared towards women advancement and empowerment at all levels, the resolutions issued by Islamic Summits and the sessions of the Council of Foreign Ministers on women empowerment always shed light on the importance of the role of women in building societies.

Symposia to Empower Women in Collaboration with Member States

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), along with the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), and the Women Development Organization (WDO) co-organized a virtual panel discussion on “Capacity Building of Female Refugees”, on the sidelines of the 66th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), on 15 March 2022. This event was organized in implementation of Resolution No. 11/8-W on Joint Action to Support and Empower Refugee and Displaced Women, issued by the 8th Session of the OIC Ministerial Conference on Women, held in Cairo, the Arab Republic of Egypt, on 6-8 July 2021.

The event aimed to highlight programmes to ensure decent living for women and girls in conflict zones and refugee camps, with a specific focus on OIC Member States. Panelists from King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre, the IsDB, the WDO, the IPHRC, ILO and the UN Women discussed the different programmes and trainings aimed at helping women to sustain themselves.

In his opening remarks, Amb. Tarig Ali Bakheet, stressed that Empowering and supporting refugee and displaced women is among the top priorities of the OIC and that with the will and support of Member States, the OIC General Secretariat along with the relevant specialized institutions, such as the IsDB and the WDO, will continue to provide supportive programmes, trainings and family support services to refugee women and girls



in conflict zones in OIC Member States.

Also, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), along with the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), and the Women Development Organization (WDO), co-organized a virtual panel discussion on “Women’s Economic Empowerment, Improving Poverty Resilience and Promoting Income Sustainability: Experience of OIC Member States”, on the sidelines of the 66th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), on 17 March 2022.

The event sought to highlight effective and innovative policies for women’s empowerment and their impact on gender justice in OIC Member States. It was also aimed to recognize practical approaches to promoting gender justice, enhancing women’s condi-

tions and socio-economic empowerment, reducing gender gaps, and discuss the best practices within the OIC Member States.

Among the panelists were high-level representatives, including H.E. Dr. Hala Elsaid, Minister of Planning and Economic Development in Egypt, and high-level participants from the UN Women, ESCWA and the IsDB.

In his opening remarks, Amb. Tarig Ali Bakheet, stressed that women advancement and empowerment are among the key priority areas for the OIC as identified under the OIC-2025 Programme of Action. Similarly, the OIC Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women has renewed the commitment of the OIC Member States, all Institutions within the OIC system, and other stakeholders to working together for a better tomorrow.

OIC Continues to Discuss Internal Regulations of Family Committee

The General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) hosted the second meeting of the Open-ended Group of Governmental Experts to finalize the internal and financial regulations of the OIC Family Committee, on 15 February 2022.

The Minister of Family and Social Services of the Republic of Turkey, H.E. Derya Yanık, chaired the meeting, and stressed in her speech the importance of completing the discussion of the internal and financial regulations of the OIC Family Committee.

Ambassador Tarig Ali Bakheet, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian, Cultural and Social Affairs of the Organization, delivered the speech of the General Secretariat at the meeting, which was held virtually, ex-

pressing his sincere thanks and appreciation to the Minister of Family and Social Services of the Republic of Turkey, Chairperson of the Ministerial Conference on Social Development, for her invitation to hold the second meeting, and for her continued support for the General Secretariat of the Organization.

Ambassador Bakheet said that the Council of Foreign Ministers had decided to establish an open-ended governmental expert group working under the supervision of the chairpersonship of the Ministerial Conference for Social Development, in order to finalize the internal and financial regulations of the OIC Family Committee, noting that the first meeting was held in October 2021, with the participation of 74 experts from 30 OIC Member

States.

Ambassador Bakheet explained that given the developments the world is witnessing today, including the deterioration of the security and humanitarian conditions, it is important to intensify efforts and cooperation among Member States to give the family the importance it deserves, as the main nucleus of society, which also aims to achieve internationally agreed development goals. “I hope that the work of this meeting will be crowned with success by reaching results that will contribute to activating the work of the OIC Family Committee and empowering the institution of marriage and family and preserving their values in the Islamic world.”



Symposium to Support Sustainable Development in Africa

The General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) held a virtual symposium under the title “Education and Development in Africa: Challenges and Opportunities.” on 2 February 2022. The symposium comes within the celebration of the International Day of Education, observed yearly on the 24th of January, and is part of a series of periodic cultural lectures held by the OIC General Secretariat.

Participants in the symposium included Dr. Usman Muhammad Bugaje from the Republic of Nigeria, who previously served as Secretary-General of Islam in Africa Organization, and a Special Adviser for Political Affairs to the Vice-President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, in addition to Dr. Widad Naibi, from the Republic of Benin, Founder and Director of Ibn Battuta African Institute. Dr. Widad is also a researcher in African literature and African women’s affairs, an ambassador for self-development, and an activist in interfaith dialogue.

The symposium highlighted the importance of the educational process as a key driver for achieving development in the countries of the African continent, and the challenges facing education outcomes. It also underscored the importance of developing educational policies and institutions and aligning them with the requirements of sustainable development through many initiatives, as well as strengthening community partnership in its various forms and manifestations

in order to achieve this goal.

On another note, and in the framework of the African Union’s efforts to accomplish what it set out to achieve to make the continent better, Agenda 2063 was presented. One of the easiest ways to push this Agenda forward is to develop the education sector, as Africa recognizes the fact that social and economic development is not possible with-

Access to education is not just a basic human right. Education is the foundation of social and economic development, an investment in human capital, as well as a sustainable means to alleviate poverty and bring about lasting change.

out substantial investment in education and research, particularly at higher education level.

Access to education is not just a basic human right. Education is the foundation of social and economic development, an investment in human capital, as well as a sustainable means to alleviate poverty and bring about lasting change.

Recently, the Executive Secretary of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), Arch. Sonny Echono, hosted a team from the Education Division of the African Union Commission, led by Professor Mohamed Belhocine, Commissioner for Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, who came to the fund at an impactful event. The Fund, generally known for providing support to research and development to tertiary education institutions in Nigeria, has revealed its willingness, through its management, to partner with the Pan African University to advance the African Union’s Agenda.

In another context, girls have a greater chance of succeeding in school in sub-Saharan Africa if they can speak English, as the language of instruction can affect academic achievement. Girls have educational problems because they are taught in English. Studies in Rwanda, Tanzania, Ghana, Kenya, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sierra Leone and Egypt have found that children generally lack basic English language skills, which still have major consequences for their learning. The University of Bath Institute for Policy Research (IPR) and the UK Girls’ Education Challenge (GEC) have published findings confirming that reliance on English as the main “language of instruction” in many schools affects girls in education the most.



OIC Signs Agreement with Turkey on Scholarships

The Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, on 14 March 2022, received Mr. Abdullah Eren, President of the Turkish Public Agency in Charge of Scholarships for International Students, along with the accompanying delegation from the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB). The Secretary-General emphasized the importance of improving the quality of higher education and scientific research in OIC Member States. The two sides agreed to make efforts to provide more educational opportunities for the youth of the Muslim world.

On this occasion, the OIC General Secretariat and the YTB signed a Cooperation Framework agreement for providing scholarships to the researchers and students of OIC Member States through the platform of OIC Educational Exchange Programme. Assistant Secretary-General for Science and Technology, Ambassador Askar Mussinov, along with Mr. Abdullah Eren, the President of YTB, signed the Framework agreement, in the presence of H.E. Ambassador Mehmet Metin Eker, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Turkey to the OIC.

Under the Framework agreement, the YTB and the General Secretariat also agreed to carry out joint studies with an aim to assess the requirements of the OIC Member States, particularly the least developed countries, in the field of higher education and scientific

research.

The signing of this agreement is in pursuance of implementing the mandate given to OIC by successive meetings of the Council of Foreign Ministers, and Islamic Summits that called for providing opportunities to the students of OIC Member States to pursue higher education and work for strengthening the capacities of the universities in the

The Secretary-General emphasized the importance of improving the quality of higher education and scientific research in OIC Member States. The two sides agreed to make efforts to provide more educational opportunities for the youth of the Muslim world.

OIC Member States.

It is worth mentioning that promoting knowledge acquisition and dissemination is one of the main objectives of the OIC Charter, which obligates the OIC Member States to promote and develop science and technology and encourage research and cooperation among the Member States in these areas.

With the aim of taking practical steps towards strengthening the bonds of Islamic solidarity and achieving its renaissance, the General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation has developed its portal dedicated to the scholarship programme on the Organization's website. The portal serves as a platform for presenting educational and training opportunities in various OIC Member States as well as in other countries. This portal is easy to use so that it can meet the aspirations of potential applicants and facilitate access to available scholarships.

The interest of the General Secretariat in developing this website stems from its keenness to provide educational opportunities for young people in the OIC Member States and to help them face the challenges resulting from the lack of education and the lack of required skills. The OIC General Secretariat will be just a point for disseminating information. Applicants will apply directly to the university or through any other channel or mechanism as proposed by the state or university.

More Member and Non-Member States are offering scholarships through the OIC Scholarship Programme, at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. These scholarships are offered in different fields such as physical sciences, engineering, information and communication technology, medicine, pharmacy and various languages.



Gambia, UNA and IBU Sign MoU at OIC Headquarters

The Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, participated in the signing ceremony of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Information and Communication Infrastructure of the Republic of The Gambia, the Union of OIC News Agencies (UNA) and the Islamic Broadcasting Union (IBU), on 15 February 2022, at the Headquarters of the OIC General Secretariat, in Jeddah. The MoU is aimed to coordinate the management of the information center that will provide media coverage of the Islamic Summit to be hosted by the Republic of The Gambia.

On this occasion, the Secretary-General praised the support provided by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the OIC host country, to both UNA and IBU through hosting their headquarters and providing them with all facilitations to support the joint Islamic action.

The Secretary-General also applauded the efforts of the Republic of The Gambia, host of the 15th Islamic Summit, to provide favorable conditions for the success of the Summit, including providing comprehensive coverage of the Summit events by collaborating with the OIC media institutions.

The MoU was also signed by H.E. Minister of Information and Communication of the Republic of The Gambia, Mr. Ebrima Sillah and Dr. Amr El-Leithy, IBU Director General, and Mr. Mohammad Abd Rabbo Al-Yami, Acting Director General of UNA, in the presence of Mr. Yankuba Dibba, Head of the Department Supervising the organization of the Islamic Summit in the Gambia.

On another note, and within the framework of cooperation, coordination and consultation between IBU and the Saudi Ministry of Information, Dr. Amr El-Leithy, IBU Director General, announced the Union's plan for media coverage of the Hajj season this year, on the sidelines of the workshop held by IBU to arrange and organize the Hajj season this year.

The plan provides for the Union benefiting from the efforts of the Ministry of Information, the Saudi Broadcasting Authority (SBA) and the General Commission for Audiovisual Media (GCAM) in Saudi Arabia, to highlight their efforts in harnessing all possibilities and overcoming difficulties, in order for the pilgrims to enjoy an atmosphere of faith. Light will be shed on these efforts by providing all engineering and programmatic services, data, and logistical support

for journalists and media professionals in the Member States, through the appointment of liaison officers in the Union to be the focal point between the Saudi Ministry of Information, the SBA, the GCAM and the Member States. In addition to agreeing to distribute live broadcasts, satellite operation data, and television coverages to all member states.

IBU also clarified that the plan includes the nomination of media professionals from the targeted Member States, invite them to transmit the events of Hajj directly and provide them with all media information, and to invite all media professionals of the Member States to participate in the press conferences before, during and after the 2022 Hajj season on Zoom to know what's happening on the ground continuously.

As part of IBU activities, the 10-day International Scholarly Session of IBU, held at the Imams Training Academy, in the city of the 6th of October, in the Arab Republic of Egypt, was concluded.

The session was held under the patronage of Dr. Mohamed Mokhtar Gomaa, Minister of Endowments, and Mr. El-Leithy, IBU President, in the presence of a group of eminent scholars.



IOFS Visits Kabul for Humanitarian Purposes

Mr. Yerlan Baidaulet, Director-General of the Islamic Organization for Food Security (IOFS), made a humanitarian visit to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan on 16-19 April 2022, with the aim of introducing stakeholders there to all the programmes the Organization has been implementing within the framework of its strategic plans and pillars. The Organization succeeded in implementing the Afghan Food Security Programme, at the request of the 17th Extraordinary Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Co-operation on the situation in Afghanistan, which was held on 19 December 2021, in Islamabad.

The delegation handed over six boxes for cleaning and filtration of water for the benefit of the Afghan people. It also signed a MoU with the World Food Programme in Afghanistan on joint humanitarian activities to help the country.

The delegation met with a number of officials of the de facto government in Afghanistan, in addition to officials of the Afghan Red Crescent Society, the World Food Programme and the Afghan Chamber of Commerce and Investment.

It should be noted that during the said meet-

ings, the IOFS Director-General was keen to acquaint the hosts with all the programmes implemented by the Organization within the framework of its strategic plans and pillars, as well as to emphasize the special mandate of the Organization.

On the first day of the visit, on the 17th of April, Mr. Baidaulet, took part in several bilateral meetings with the local de facto authorities, during which they discussed food security reserves, in order for the government to take the necessary measures to implement such an important tool to ensure the sustainability of food security in Afghanistan. They also exchanged views on how the IOFS is involved in supporting agricultural development projects, particularly those that also fall under the purview of other relevant OIC affiliated organizations, such as the Islamic Development Bank Group to benefit from the OIC platform to ensure that the necessary support reaches rural areas in Afghanistan.

Mr. Baidaulet met with Mullah Nooruddin Turabi, Deputy President of the Afghan Red Crescent Society, to learn about the important humanitarian work carried out by the Afghan Red Crescent and how the Food Security Organization can collaborate with

them to enhance the implementation of humanitarian food assistance projects.

The delegation listened to a presentation by the CEO of Bondh E Shams, Mr. Hamza Farrukh, on the water filtration and cleaning boxes mode of operation. The relevant Afghan authorities committed to identifying six water-scarce villages to benefit from this project being implemented under the Afghanistan Food Security Programme (AFSP), as stipulated by the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers, held last December.

Mr. Abdul Rahman Rashid was selected to attend a bilateral meeting on strengthening relations between the IOFS and the Afghan authorities. The meeting discussed food security and agricultural development in Afghanistan, the involvement of Afghan experts in such efforts, by participating in food security governance efforts and gene banks. It also underlined the commitment to implementing the food security reserve, within the OIC mandated framework.

The IOFS Director-General witnessed the signing of a MoU with the World Food Programme to cooperate on joint projects in Afghanistan, particularly Afghanistan Food Security Programme.



Uzbekistan's National Observance of Workers of Culture and Art Day

Dr. Salim M. AlMalik, Director-General (DG) of the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO), noted that the establishment of the National Day of Workers of Culture and Art in the Republic of Uzbekistan represents a milestone in the fields of literature, arts, thought and culture of this generous country. He added that Uzbekistan, which is regarded as one of the pillars of Islamic civilization, has long been associated with science and culture and has brought significant contributions to these fields throughout its long history. The statement came in a video-recorded address for the celebration held in Tashkent on Friday, April 15, 2022, in observance

of the National Day of Workers of Culture and Art in the Republic of Uzbekistan. The celebration saw the presence of Mr. Ozodbek Nazarbekov, Uzbek Minister of Culture, along with various members of the Uzbek government and representatives of different cultural and artistic bodies in the country. Dr. AlMalik began his speech by extending his congratulations and best wishes on the occasion of Ramadan, the month of love and peace, noting that the celebration will have a positive impact, particularly on the preservation of the Uzbek cultural identity and all forms of literary and artistic expression in the country. "ICESCO hopes that its Member States will valorize culture and

arts and give them their rightful place and due recognition for their pivotal role in the Islamic world's social development" added ICESCO DG.

He concluded his address by reaffirming ICESCO's support for Uzbekistan's initiative to celebrate the National Day of Workers of Culture and Art, and its full readiness to contribute with all its capacity to the organization of all future activities to be held in observance of this day.

The event featured a tribute to a group of young artists and creative people from all Uzbek cities, along with various performances of songs from the Uzbek musical heritage as well as modern music.

Arrangements for Launching Network of Theatre and Film Training Institutions

The Federation of the Universities of the Islamic World (FUIW) of the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) held a meeting with representatives of several universities, institutes and colleges offering education in arts, theatre and music in the Islamic world. The meeting aimed at discussing arrangements for launching the Network of Theatre, Film and Performing Arts Training Institutions in FUIW Member Universities, which seeks to foster cooperation among faculties, institutes and colleges, and promote exchange among students and researchers. The meeting took place on Tuesday, Febru-

ary 15, 2022, at Hassan I University in Settat, Morocco, and via videoconference. The parties reviewed the educational experiences of participating universities, institutes and colleges and explored avenues of cooperation to ensure the success of the Network of Theatre, Film and Performing Arts Training Institutions in FUIW Member Universities. Dr. Salim M. Al-Malik, ICESCO Director-General (DG) and FUIW Secretary-General began the meeting with welcoming remarks, noting that the Network is part of the Draft Statute of the Leagues of Parallel Faculties. This project is geared towards promoting linkages among Member Universities and

developing joint scientific and research plans that would facilitate exchange among researchers and students.

ICESCO DG added that this project aims to enhance cooperation among colleges, institutes and schools offering education in theater, cinema and performing arts in FUIW Member Universities, achieve convergence of visions, and standardize relevant terminology. The Network also seeks to encourage the creation of specialized research centers and foster cooperation with peer colleges and institutes in international universities.



Damanhour Opera House: Egyptian Architectural Masterpiece

Cairo - Hajjaj Salama - (DPA): The building of Damanhour Opera House, an architectural and decorative masterpiece, might be one of the important historical architectural monuments that has attracted the attention of researchers, scholars and lovers of patrimonial architecture.

This building, which was built at the end of the third decade of the twentieth century, is an architectural and artistic masterpiece that embodies the characteristics of the Egyptian architecture in the early fourth decade of the last century.

In terms of design, the building is built in the Italian opera style that entered Egypt during the era of Khedive Ismail, and then became prevalent in the architecture of this type of facilities. The building is characterized by the use of Islamic architectural and decorative elements. The building marries perfectly the incoming European design, which is commensurate with the function of the opera, with the Islamic architectural elements that were used in the Fatimid and subsequent eras.

Damanhour Opera House was not the only building that was associated with the architecture of the Italian opera. Many historical buildings in Egypt were associated with two pioneers of Italian architecture, namely the architects Pietro Avoscani and Mario Rossi, the latter was particularly known in the field

of Islamic architecture.

Khedive Ismail, the fifth ruler of Egypt, aspired to make Egypt a modern country similar to European countries. He decided to call for the help of architects, Pietro Avoscani, and Mario Rossi, to create the design of the first Egyptian opera building; hence, Damanhour Opera House, just as Cairo Opera House, was influenced by the style of the Italian opera houses.

Considering the artistic and architectural value of the opera house, which justly reflects the architecture of Egyptian theaters at the beginning of the last century, and highlights the artistic elements of floral and geometric motifs, circular arches, and others in the Andalusian style. Given that this theater was opened in 1930, the Islamic and Coptic Antiquities Department at the Supreme Council of Antiquities, registered it as an Islamic monument, after the approval of the Permanent Committee of Islamic and Local Antiquities, in order to preserve its artistic and architectural elements, in implementation of the country's antiquities protection law.

Damanhour Opera House, which was also known as the Municipal Theater, is described by archaeologists and architects as "a wonderful architectural masterpiece, creatively made by the architect to be added to the ranks of immortal architectural and artistic



works that abound in Egypt, in general and the city of Damanhour, in particular, where the Municipal Theater was distinguished by a group of unique Islamic decorative and architectural elements. The main facade of the theater contains two patterns of prominent memorial entrances that characterize Islamic monuments."

In view of this architectural and artistic value, the Egyptian Ministry of Culture succeeded in reviving the historical, cultural and artistic role of this building, and restored it to play its role in reviving the cultural life in the country, along with Cairo Opera House, Alexandria Opera House and other cultural monuments that Egypt hosts.

Given that Damanhour Opera House has the same value, the building was hugely restored by the Supreme Council of Antiquities. A team of the most skilled restorers in the country was hired to carry out the mission. They were able to restore the architectural elements of the building.

Four ICESCO Ambassadors for Peace Elected as Members of the Executive Committee of the Pan-African Youth Union



Dr. Salim M. AlMalik, Director-General (DG) of the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO), took part in the inaugural ceremony of the Executive Bureau of the Pan-African Youth Union.

The ceremony was held as part of the inauguration of the new Union headquarters in Rabat, Morocco, which saw the participation of Mr. Mahdi Bensaid, Moroccan Minister of Youth, Culture and Communication, the president of the Youth African Union,

members of the Union's Executive Bureau and several youth ministers of African countries.

The Pan-African Youth Union is an entity dedicated to young people and youth national councils at the African Union and aims to promote the principles and values of peace, democracy and sustainable development to achieve African complementarity.

In his address at the ceremony, held on Monday 21 February 2022, at the archeological site Challah in Rabat, Mr. Bensaid stressed

that Africa is a space for solidarity among nations, intercultural dialogue, openness and substantial potential, reaffirming that youth is Africa's promising asset for a better future.

Morocco and the Union signed in November 2021 an agreement to transfer its headquarters to Rabat, in harmony with the Kingdom's keen interest in youth and investment in African human capital.

On a separate occasion, a delegation of the members of the Executive Committee of the Pan-African Youth Union (PYU) visited the headquarters of the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO), in Rabat, on Tuesday, February 22, 2022, to discuss ways to build cooperation between ICESCO and the Union in the field of training and capacity building for the benefit of youth in Africa.

The delegation included four ICESCO Ambassadors for Peace: Mr. Moumouni Dialla, current President of the Union, Mr. Aliou Oumarou, former President of the Union, as well as two members of the Executive Committee of the Union, Ms. Fadimato Osmanou and Ms. Pamela Derom. They participated in ICESCO's 2021 Program: Leadership Training in Peace and Security (LTIPS) for the benefit of women and youth.

ICESCO's Arabic Language Training Workshop for Non-Arabic Speakers

The training workshop on educational linguistics and its role in developing the language skills of non-Arabic speaking students learning the Arabic language kicked off on Friday, March 18, 2022, via video-conference. The workshop is organized by the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) in cooperation with the Arabic Language Department at the University of Leeds in the United Kingdom.

The training workshop is held in light of ICESCO's new vision endeavoring to develop and upgrade strategies for teaching Arabic to non-Arabic speakers in line with modern educational approaches in and beyond the Organization's Member States.



The workshop is aimed at developing the competencies and teaching abilities of over thirty Arabic teachers from various schools

and institutions in the UK's Yorkshire region. By leveraging the latest developments in educational linguistics and techniques for developing the four skills of language learning (listening – speaking – reading – writing) according to proficiency levels, the workshop seeks to enable participants to prepare supplementary instructional materials for teaching Arabic.

The two-day workshop featured interventions and presentations tackling three major topics: the challenges and difficulties in teaching Arabic in the UK, the major educational strategies for teaching language skills, and models for preparing supplementary courses to scale up skill development strategies.

ICESCO's Study on the Futures of the African Continent

The Center for Strategic Foresight at the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) held a roundtable meeting to present the outlines and preliminary findings of its study, prepared by a host of international experts and specialists on the "Possible Futures of the African Continent." The meeting aimed to identify the best practices considering the new global trends and their consistency with the African reality and better understand the necessary factors to achieve the desired progress in the African continent.

At the outset of the meeting, held on Thursday, 10 February 2022, via videoconference, Dr. Salim M. Al-Malik, ICESCO Director-General, gave an address wherein he indicated that ICESCO includes 26 African countries in its membership, adding that it strives to meet their needs through various programs for the benefit of different groups, especially women and youth.

He added that ICESCO Center for Strategic Foresight's Study on the "Possible Futures of the African Continent" represents an opportunity to examine the current scenario, consider opportunities at the continental level and clarify ways to develop Africa. "ICESCO is committed to contributing to the efforts geared towards providing an innovative solution to the major challenges facing Africa towards 2050. It also plays its pivotal role in promoting the culture of foresight to build a better African future," stressed ICESCO DG. Afterward, the participants in the meeting, which was moderated by Dr. Kais Hammani, Director of ICESCO Center for Strategic



Foresight, and his team, reviewed the findings of the study. Dr. Alioune Sall, Executive Director of the African Futures Institute, South Africa, stressed the importance of analyzing the current situation in Africa to understand the process of change in the continent and identify its future prospects. Dr. Jacy Karoy Sibena, Assistant Professor at the School of Governance at the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa, indicated that innovation and technological development are still below the required level in Africa, particularly with the Covid-19 pandemic that has affected the economy. For his part, Dr. Mohammed Tariq, Professor at the Faculty of Legal, Economic and Social Sciences, Hassan II University of Mo-

hammedia, Kingdom of Morocco, gave a presentation on the future of youth in Africa after the Covid-19 pandemic, wherein he stressed that the continent's youth face many challenges related to health care, education, unemployment and terrorism, adding that youth are at the forefront of digital transformation.

On a separate occasion, ICESCO Regional Educational Center held a training session for teachers of Arabic for non-Arabic speakers as part of the terms of the agreement signed between the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) and ICESCO Educational Center in Chad, within the framework of the Arabic language teaching project in Chad for 2021.

ICESCO Launches Young Professionals Programme

The Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) announces the start of application for the first edition of its Young Professionals Programme for 2022.

This Programme comes within the framework of ICESCO's new vision and action strategy, which fosters young people's visions, strengthens their capacities and develops their leadership and professional skills to build a responsible and professional generation and upgrade the fields of education, science and culture in the Islamic world.

To join ICESCO Young Professionals Programme 2022, the candidate must be a citizen of one of ICESCO Member States; be no older than 35 years; hold at least a BA degree or its equivalent in education, science, culture or any other field relevant to the Organization's



areas of action; and be proficient in at least one of the Organization's working languages (Arabic, English or French).



The Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA) and the International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan held a training session on “The Importance of Oriental Manuscripts in Conducting Research in the Field of Islamic Studies”, on 25-26 May 2022 at IRCICA’s headquarters in Istanbul. Participants included several academics from universities of Uzbekistan. The session, moderated by Prof. Dr. Sadık Ünay and Prof. Dr. Ashirbek Muminov, was supplemented by study visits to IRCICA Library and Archives and to the historical Süleymaniye Library.

The session included eight lectures and they tackled the following subjects, Library of IRCICA: Book Funds, Archives and Programmes; Conducting Research in the Ottoman Archives; Manuscripts of “Sha-



Training Program on “The Importance of Oriental Manuscripts”

mail al-Nabi” by al-Imam al-Tirmidhi; Research Project “Catalogue of the Works by Ibn Sina”; Critical Edition of “Wafiyat al-Aslaf” by Shihab Al-Din Al-Marjani; Islamic Architecture; Islamic Calligraphy; and Islamic Culture in Africa.

On another note, the 12th International Calligraphy Competition, dedicated to Calligrapher Mustafa Râkım Efendi (1758-1826), was declared open in June 2021. A total of 697 works were submitted to the competition in the ten categories of writing styles by 535 calligraphers from 31 countries. After evaluations by the Jury chaired by IRCICA Director-General Prof. Dr. Mahmud Erol Kılıç and composed of calligraphy experts from Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Turkey, 61 works by 49 calligraphers from 10 countries won awards. First, second, third prizes and mentions were distributed in each category. An exhibition of the award-winning works was open for visits in IRCICA’s exhibition hall from 21 to 27 May.

The announcement of the winners on 21 May 2022 was followed by the presentation of Ijaza (certificate) to 15 calligraphers from 9 countries (India, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Malaysia, The Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, United Kingdom, and Yemen) who successfully completed the training programmes coordinated by IRCICA.

The competition included several scripts, namely Jaly Thuluth, won by Teguh Prastio from Indonesia; Thuluth, won by Ahmet Ali Namazi from Iran; Naskh, won by Ihab Ibraheem Thabet from Jordan; Muhaqqaq, won by Meryem Nuruzihalilani from Turkey; Thuluth-Naskh, won by Hakan Arslan from Turkey; Jaly Taliq, won by Safar Galeshi from Iran; Taliq, won by Safar Galeshi from Iran; Jaly Diwani, won by Abdulrazzak Mohamad Al-Mahmod from Syria; Diwani won by Abdessamad Mihfad from Morocco; and Kufi, won by Fatemeh Moghimi from Iran.

SESRIC Organises Training Course on ‘Disaster Risk Management’



Within the framework of SESRIC’s Disaster Risk Management Capacity Building Programme (DRM-CaB), the Centre, in collaboration with the Tunisian Agency for Technical Cooperation (ATCT), organised, through an online video conferencing platform, a Training Course on “Disaster Risk Identification and Risk Assessment” on 28-30 March 2022 for the benefit of OIC African French-Speaking Member Countries.

A competent expert from the Ministry of Equipment, Housing and Territorial Development of the Republic of Tunisia conducted the training course for the benefit of 105 experts from relevant Ministries and national institutions in charge of disaster risk management in 13 OIC African French-speaking Member Countries, namely Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Comoros, Cote d’Ivoire, Djibouti, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, and Togo. In addition, experts from Lebanon also attended and benefitted from the training.

The training course aimed at enhancing the technical human capacities of participants in disaster risk assessment and management by

providing the necessary tools to effectively plan, facilitate, and coordinate disaster risk assessment activities in their respective countries. It also contributed to sharing knowledge, experience and best practices among the relevant national institutions of the OIC African French-speaking Member Countries to identify and mitigate disaster risk.

The training course started with the opening statement by H.E. Mr. Nebil DABUR, Director General of SESRIC, who highlighted the importance of this topic by pointing out the latest data on disaster risks according to SESRIC’s OIC Statistical Outlook Report on “Cost of Natural Disasters in OIC Member Countries” published in October 2021. Recalling the significance of the environment for sustainable social and economic development in the OIC-2025 Programme of Action, the Director General also informed the participants that several other global initiatives like Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Paris Agreement on Climate Change, New Urban Agenda and Addis Ababa Action Agenda are providing opportunities

and resources to enhance urban resilience by adopting sustainable urban development practices. Before concluding, the Director General assured the participants that SESRIC will continue furthering its efforts towards enhancing the technical capacities of human resources of the relevant Ministries and national institutions in charge of disaster risk management in the OIC Member Countries. In his opening statement, H.E. Mr. El Borni SALHI, Director General of the Tunisian Agency for Technical Cooperation (ATCT), started by introducing the Agency and expressed its readiness in developing further cooperation with SESRIC as well as the relevant national African institutions from the OIC Member Countries. Moreover, he stressed the importance of developing the capacities of African experts in different domains, including disaster risk management. In his conclusion, H.E. Mr. SALHI expressed his hope that participating experts will benefit from this training course at the utmost level and then transfer their accumulated knowledge and experience.

World Water Day: Making the Invisible Visible

On the World Water Day, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) reiterates the need for concerted efforts to address the challenges of reliable access to water as well as the management of other water related risks for better health, livelihood and economic prosperity of all. This year's International World Water Day theme "Groundwater: Making the Invisible Visible" once again underlines the importance of water as a precious resource and highlights that groundwater is a vital water supply for humanity, which may not be seen but it must not be forgotten as a hidden treasure needed to enrich our lives.

Although water is part of our everyday lives, yet it has not been recognized and managed as the fundamental resource that is essential for human life. The sustainable management of groundwater is the solution for the increasing water shortages, poor water quality and droughts accentuated by climate change. Continuing to neglect the groundwater sources will exacerbate the water problems in many of the OIC member states and will lead to economic and demographic



changes affecting negatively on their socio-economic development.

Member States must work on raising the public awareness regarding the importance of groundwater and to intensify efforts at

the official level by providing the adequate management and devise all possible ways to manage groundwater as an element, which can alleviate the water problems if we seek its responsible use and replenishment.

OIC Commemorates the 30th Anniversary of Khojaly Massacre

On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the commemoration of the genocide in the town of Khojaly of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, has paid tribute to all those who lost their lives in the 1992 atrocity.

The Secretary General reiterated that the Khojaly incident was a result of the illegal occupation of Azerbaijani territories by the Republic of Armenia. He referred to the Cairo Final Communiqué (Paragraph 117) adopted by the 12th Session of the Islamic Summit, held in Cairo in 2013 and to the Resolution No. 51/47-POL on "Solidar-

ity with the victims of Khojaly Massacre of 1992" adopted by the 47th Session of the CFM held in Niamey in 2020, which considered the actions perpetrated against civilian Azerbaijani population in the occupied town of Khojaly, as war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide at the national and international levels.

OIC Stresses the Promotion of Concepts of Social Justice on its World Day

On the occasion of the World Day of Social Justice, which falls on February 20 of each year, the General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) held a virtual lecture on March 7 under the title "Justice: The Absolute Supreme Value in Islam: Its Repercussions on the Individual and Society", and it came within a series of lectures and cultural seminars held by the General Secretariat of the Organization, in order to promote and develop the cultural content.

The lecture was presented by Dr. Nasr Muhammad from the Arab Republic of Egypt, Professor of Political Science at Cairo University in Egypt, and Adviser to the President of the World Council of Muslim Communities in the United Arab Emirates.

It is worth noting that the celebration of this day represents an occasion to encourage states to strive to achieve social justice for all, achieve development and preserve human dignity, as social justice is a fundamental principle of peaceful coexistence within

and among nations in which prosperity is achieved.

The lecture shed light on the concept of the value system represented in the values of justice, equality and freedom, the difference in the value system according to the civilizational pattern, the implications of the value of justice on ideas and judgments, social relations, economic practices, management and organization, politics and governance, and international transactions.

Secretary-General Congratulates Muslim World on Eid El-Fitr



Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, expressed warm felicitations to the entire Muslim Ummah, on the occasion of the 1443 Eid El-Fitr, praying to Almighty Allah to accept their fast and bless the Muslim world with bounty. In the same vein, the Secretary-General congratulated Their Excellencies and Highnesses Kings, Presidents and Emirs of the OIC Member States.

The Secretary-General also joined the host country in the festivities of the occasion, congratulating the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia under the leadership of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud and Crown Prince HRH Prince Mohamed Bin Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud.

The Secretary-General asserted that, although Eid is an occasion that carries lofty

meanings and feelings, the existence of numerous crises in the Ummah as we celebrate the Eid remains a source of distress. He renewed the solidarity of the OIC with the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque in the face of wicked Israeli onslaught. He equally expressed solidarity with the Rohingya refugees and other Muslims in various part of the world, including the Lake Chad Basin and Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir and other crises zones across the globe whose Eid celebrations have been dampened by their difficult conditions.

On a different note, the Secretary General stressed that signs of decline of the COVID-19 pandemic and relaxation of precautionary measures in many countries of the world make these Eid celebrations rather unique. He prayed to Allah to rid the world permanently of this pandemic and restore

health and tranquility to all.

At the conclusion of his remarks, the Secretary-General expressed his hope that peace, blessings, security, safety and prosperity will prevail in all OIC and non-OIC member states, and that the causes of hatred, violence, extremism and terrorism will be brought to an end. He also hoped that the occasion would be an opportunity for self-reevaluation and the continuation of serious collective action to overcome the challenges facing the entire Islamic Ummah.

For the record, the OIC General Secretariat had held a collective Iftar banquet in the holy month of Ramadan on April 12th. The Secretary-General received the invited ambassadors and diplomats from the Member States of the Organization, in addition to notables, officials of the General Secretariat, and its employees.

Al-Mutairi is Accredited by the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law

The International Institute for Sustainable Development stated that Mr. Bader Al-Mutairi, a Kuwaiti diplomat, who works as Deputy Head of the OIC Permanent Mission to the United Nations in Geneva, has been accredited by the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law, after successfully obtaining the Master of Laws in International Trade Law, upon finishing 2-year programme provided by the University of Turin.

Mr. Al-Mutairi is the first Kuwaiti to receive this accreditation. He has also received re-



cently the International Gold Award in Sustainable Development for the efforts he made during his academic and professional career.

Al-Mutairi is a fellow of the International Labor Organization, a member of the International Institute for Sustainable Development and a number of legal and diplomatic bodies and institutions. He was also recently approved as an ambassador for humanitarian diplomacy by the United Kingdom Diplomatic Academy in London.

Launch of IRCICA and Al-Biruni Institute of Oriental Studies Joint Book



The book "New Perspectives for the Study of Islamic Culture, History and Art in Uzbekistan", published jointly by Abu Rayhan Al-Biruni Institute of Oriental Studies of Uzbekistan Academy of Sciences and IRCICA, was launched during the opening ceremony of the international online conference "Central Asian Islamic Manuscripts: Cultural Heritage and Historical Source", in Tashkent, on 16 November 2021. The conference was organized by Abu Rayhan Al-Biruni Institute of Oriental Studies of Uzbekistan Academy of Sciences, the Institute of Iranian Studies of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, the British Institute of Persian Studies, and Leiden University.

The book contains a preface and consists of a collection of research papers that were presented during the international conference on "New Perspectives for the Study of Islamic Culture, History and Art in Uzbekistan", dedicated to the memory of Academician Ubaydulla Karimov. The conference was organized by Al-Biruni Institute and IRCICA, online and offline, on 28 May 2021. Prof. Dr. Mahmud Erol Kılıç, Director-General of IRCICA, gave an address at the opening session of the conference "Central Asian Islamic Manuscripts: Cultural Heritage and Historical Source" and presented the book to the participants. The book (774 pp., 24 cm.) includes a total of 84 articles in the Uzbek, Russian and Turkish languages, each with an abstract in English.

In his opening speech, Prof. Bakhrom Abdukhalimov, Director of Abu Rayhan Al-Biruni Institute of Oriental Studies and Vice-President of the Uzbekistan Academy of Sciences, said that the Institute gives importance to cooperation with institutions around the world and has organized dozens of academic conferences with the aim of promoting the academic study of Is-

It will benefit academics and administrators involved in research and curriculum development as well as specialists and researchers in various disciplines of cultural studies

lamic manuscripts, particularly Central Asian manuscripts. Prof. Abdukhalimov expressed thanks and appreciation, on behalf of his Institute's staff and on his own, to Prof. Dr. Mahmud Erol Kılıç, Director-General of IRCICA, for the academic support and cooperation extended to the Institute. Prof. Florian Schwarz, Director of the Institute of Iranian Studies at the Austrian Academy of Sciences, said in his speech, that one of the most dynamic fields is that of studies on

manuscripts and manuscript cultures. He also pointed to the significance of these materials as sources of historical, literary, artistic and other information and also as cultural heritage. Prof. Gabrielle van den Berg, from Leiden University, spoke of the development of Central Asian studies at Leiden University, in the past and present, and the expanding cooperation between Central Asian and European universities. Prof. Charles Melville, President of the British Institute of Persian Studies, pointed out to the coverage of the designation "Persian manuscripts" which historically extends beyond the frontiers of modern Iran. Speaking of the developments in manuscript studies, he described the association of researchers with manuscripts as lively, active and genuine.

In his address, Prof. Dr. Mahmud Erol Kılıç underlined the importance of studies on Islamic manuscripts from the viewpoint of IRCICA. Presenting the new book, the Director-General said that it covers a remarkably wide spectrum of topics of Islamic studies, manuscript studies in particular, approached from different perspectives. With this diversified coverage, it will benefit academics and administrators involved in research and curriculum development as well as specialists and researchers in various disciplines of cultural studies, he underscored. Prof. Kılıç also spoke of the engagement of IRCICA in promoting studies on Islamic history and culture and the sources of this culture including manuscripts. He also underlined the wide geographical coverage of IRCICA's activities over the OIC membership area that includes Central Asia, Caucasia, South and Southeast Asia, the Middle East and the Mediterranean, Eastern Europe, and Africa. The Director-General thanked Professor Abdukhalimov and his colleagues for their cooperation which resulted in the new publication.

21 research papers were presented by specialists in Islamic manuscripts from Asian and European countries. The sessions of the conference were titled: "Preserving the written cultural heritage"; "Manuscript evidence and historical interpretation"; "Manuscript collections: past, present, and future"; "Visual dimensions of manuscripts"; "Beyond the codex"; and "Producing, publishing and studying texts: From manuscript cultures to the digital age".



Russian Pilgrims: Journey to Makkah

that
began
in 1494 AD

The roads to Mecca witnessed stories told by the early Muslims in countries that some think had no Muslims. In Tsarist Russia, in the early years of spreading the message of Islam, the Russians accepted Islam in 22 AH. Dagestan city of Derbent was the first city conquered by Muslims.

Dr. Mohamed Al-Jabali, former cultural advisor in Moscow, and Head of the Russian Language Department at Ain Shams University, says that Islamic kingdoms expanded in different regions of Russia, including Golden Horde, Kazan, Astrakhan, etc. In a research paper he prepared, he underlined that a number of members of the ruling families performed Hajj in 1494 AD, including Queen Nur Sultan to Mecca, and in 1524 AD, the Khan Sahib Giray renounced the throne of Kazan because of his desire to travel for the pilgrimage.

In the following centuries, Russia reacquired the Islamic kingdoms and the issue of Hajj did not receive proper attention, therefore, it is not surprising that the first Russian legislation on Hajj was in 1803, and it was allowing the people of Bukhara (currently Uzbekistan) to travel for Hajj. There were 3 main routes to travel for pilgrimage from Russia.

The first through the Caucasus to northern Iran, then Iraq, then across the Arabian Peninsula to Mecca and Medina directly. The second route was through the cities of Samarkand and Bukhara in Uzbekistan, then to Afghanistan, Pakistan and India, and from there by sea to Jeddah and Yanbu. The third and final route was through the ports of the Black Sea to Istanbul and Suez in Egypt, then Jeddah and Yanbu, and from there to Mecca and Medina.

In his research paper, he asserts that the 19th century witnessed a discrepancy in the number of Russian pilgrims, due to epidemics, as the average number of pilgrims ranged from 9: 10 thousand pilgrims annually. The Russian Consulate in Jeddah conducted an accurate census of the number of pilgrims in 1894 AD, during which their number reached 3349 pilgrims. In 1901, the number was 6000, and it rose to 16000 in 1902 AD, and then decreased to 5000 in 1903 AD. He explains that the twentieth century witnessed the emergence of new routes to travel for pilgrimage, as it became possible to travel from Moscow by train to Warsaw, and from there to Vienna and then to Istanbul. The road used to take 6 days and cost

about 100 Russian rubles. Ships used to sail from the Black Sea ports, and there were direct cruises to Jeddah. The poor, according to Al-Jabali, used to travel through Afghanistan, which was 5 times cheaper than the route through Turkey.

He highlights that the Russian Consulate in Jeddah played an important role in organizing the pilgrimage. The first consul in 1890 was Shaji Murat Miriasovich, a Tatar. The work of the consulate continued until the beginning of World War I, and then reopened with the inauguration of Soviet-Saudi relations in 1924 AD. However, for ideological reasons, the pilgrimage stopped, as the Soviet authorities did not encourage the practice of rituals, but in 1945 AD pilgrims traveled under the leadership of Mufti Babakhan. The average number of pilgrims did not exceed 20 pilgrims annually.

Al-Jabali explained that the following years will witness a remarkable increase in the number of Russian pilgrims wishing to perform Hajj, which requires a lot of efforts, adding that the role of Russian pilgrims exceeds performing Hajj, to representing a cultural bridge for dialogue between two ancient cultures.

Chad

Capital: N'Djamena
Area: 1,284,000 square kilometers
Official languages: French and Arabic
Currency: Central African Franc XAF



Chad, pronounced "Tchad" in French, officially called the Republic of Chad. It is a landlocked country in Central Africa. It is bordered by Libya to the north, Sudan to the east, the Central African Republic to the south, Cameroon and Nigeria to the southwest, and Niger to the west. It is the fifth largest country in Africa in terms of area. Chad is divided into several regions: a desert region in the north, the arid Sahel belt in the center and the more fertile Sudanese savanna in the south. Lake Chad, after which the country is named, is the largest wetland in Chad and the second largest in Africa. The capital, N'Djamena, is the largest city in Chad.

The official languages in Chad are Arabic and French. Chad is home to more than 200 different ethnic and linguistic groups. Islam (55%) and Christianity (40%.) are the main religions practiced in Chad.

In the 7th millennium BC, ecological conditions in the northern half of Chadian territory favored human settlement, and its population increased considerably. Some of the most important African archaeological sites are found in Chad, mainly in the Borkou-Ennedi-Tibesti Region, some date to earlier

than 2000 BC. Beginning in the 7th millennium BC, human populations moved into the Chadian basin in great numbers. By the end of the 1st millennium AD, a series of states and empires had risen and fallen in Chad's Sahelian strip, each focused on controlling the trans-Saharan trade routes that passed through the region. France conquered the territory by 1920 and incorporated it as part of French Equatorial Africa.

The history of Chad goes back to the era of empires, when the first Muslim empire was established in Chad in the 2nd century AH, corresponding to the 8th century AD. Its name was the Kanem Empire, established to the northeast of Lake Chad, then its influence expanded in the 3rd century AH and included the entire Middle Sudan region, until it fell under French colonialism. In 1960, Chad gained its independence.

Chad is located in the center of the African continent, as mentioned, it is considered a landlocked country that does not overlook a sea or an external ocean. Two rivers, Logon and Chari, converge in the capital, N'Djamena, and flow into Lake Chad, northwest of the capital, N'Djamena.

Most of the country consists of dry desert land and rocky plateaus. Tibesti mountain range in northwestern Chad, includes the highest peak in the country, the summit of Mount Emi Koussi, which reaches 3,415 m above sea level. A large area of savanna in central Chad isolates the vast desert in the north, which forms part of the Sahara, from a small, very fertile region in the south.

The surface of the Chadian land is a reflection of the tectonic plates that make up the central part of Africa, which consists of a huge inner basin that occupies the concave of Chad, and of the ancient pillars of the African plate surrounding the basin from the north, east and south, in addition to the Niger pillars located in the west outside the borders of the Republic of Chad. Accordingly, rocks dating back to the pre-Cambrian era are spread in Chad, in addition to impulsive rocks and sedimentary rocks from the second geological era in the north and east of the country. As for the most widespread rocks, they belong to the fourth geological period, and most of them are sand covering the interior and western Chadian lands, Chari River basin and Lake Chad.



Augmenting Islamic cultures • Combating poverty
 Protecting the rights of Muslim minorities • Promoting Science and Technology
 Preserving Islamic heritage • Joint Islamic solidarity
 Strengthening International relations • Promoting development
 Combating terrorism • Achieving economic and trade cooperations
 Encouraging dialogue among cultures and religions
 Boosting Economic and Trade cooperation
 Defending the Palestine Cause • Defending the rights of Muslims



منظمة التعاون الإسلامي
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Islamic Republic of Pakistan Hosted the
48th Session of the Council of Foreign
Ministers, Islamabad, March 2022



The capital city of Islamabad, located on the Pothohar Plateau in the northern Punjab, is one of the oldest human settlement sites in Asia.

