

# OIC

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Secretary-General and Japan's Prime Minister Discuss Issues of Common Concern

## Qur'an Supremacy OIC Leads International Stance against Desecration



**Islamic Republic of Mauritania**  
**Hosts 49th Session of the**  
**OIC Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM)**  
Nouakchott – 2023



The Chinguetti Mosque is a mosque in Chinguetti, Adrar Region, Mauritania. It was an ancient center of worship created by the founders of the oasis city of Chinguetti in the Adrar region of Mauritania in the thirteenth or fourteenth century.



# OUR MESSAGE

## A Historic OIC Role in the Face of Holy Quran Burning Incidents

Since the beginning of this year, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has proven capable of making significant achievements, thanks to its clear-sighted vision as well as to the steadfast and unified position of its Member States. The OIC has, in fact, assumed a historic role in the face of the deplorable incidents that occurred in Sweden, the Netherlands and Denmark in late January, and those that took place in Sweden and Denmark in June and July.

The OIC held numerous meetings and consultations to address the act of burning copies of the Holy Quran in those countries. It first convened an Extraordinary Open-ended Meeting of the Executive Committee, on January 31st, in response to this disgraceful act.

Since June 29th, the OIC has embarked on a series of sustained actions to respond to this offensive behavior which can only be described as an unjustified, selective hostility whose only purpose is to incite hatred. This act is reminiscent of the Middle Ages, which were known for book-burning, a heinous practice that had marked this dark period of history.

The OIC's efforts culminated with the 18th Extraordinary Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers, convened at the invitation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, current Chair of the Islamic Summit, and the Republic of Iraq, to both of whom we owe our thanks and appreciation. We also extend our thanks to all Member States for all their efforts and contributions in response to this issue.

The OIC reaffirmed, more than once, its strong condemnation and rejection of the disgraceful acts of desecration of the Holy Quran. It undertook several actions all along the past period, particularly the holding, on July 2nd, of an Extraordinary Open-ended Meeting of the Executive Committee, at Saudi Arabia's invitation, to discuss this despicable attack on the Holy Quran.

The OIC missions in New York, Geneva, and Brussels, and the OIC Group of Countries in New York and Geneva, undertook an intensive action and valuable initiatives to make the competent organs in the relevant organizations aware of these persistent violations. The latest of these initiatives culminated in an urgent debate in the United Nations Human Rights Council, following which the Council adopted Resolution 53/1. I avail myself of this opportunity to call for a full commitment to the provisions of this Resolution, especially after the UNGA's adoption of a resolution proclaiming March 15th of each year as "International Day to Combat Islamophobia".

Besides, pursuant to the mandate entrusted to me by the OIC Executive Committee, I conveyed the Member States' concerns to the Governments of Sweden and Denmark as well as to the UN Secretary-General and the Chair of the UN Security Council. I made it clear to them that those provocations had reached an alarming level, and expressed my disappointment that the concerned authorities continued to grant permits allowing such acts to be committed.

I called on the Swedish authorities to consider the seriousness of the issue for the Islamic world, and its repercussions on Sweden's relations with the OIC countries. I also informed them of my decision to suspend the status of the Special Envoy of Sweden to the OIC. The Swedish Foreign Minister responded by asserting that his country's government rejects the desecration of Islamic sanctities, and is keen to maintain good relations with the OIC and its Member States. The Swedish government also promised to take actions to prevent insults to sanctities.

I also received a phone call from the Danish Foreign Minister, to whom I conveyed the OIC's stance and the Member States' deep concern. I called on the Danish government to take the necessary actions to prevent the recurrence of such acts in the future. The Minister asserted that his government had condemned the incident and was carefully considering the measures that could be taken in this regard. He stressed that his country is keen to maintain relations of friendship and cooperation with the OIC Member States.

Our efforts were not only related to the incidents that took place in June. Previously, in March, the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers had adopted, in its 49th session held in Nouakchott, other resolutions pertaining to this issue.

I had extensive contacts with top-ranking officials of member and non-member States, as well as with senior officials of international organizations, including the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Chair of the UN Security Council, in order to enhance awareness of the gravity of this issue. We have also been keen to have this issue included on the agenda of the various meetings and consultations held with officials of countries and partner international organizations.

Our countries and the General Secretariat have continuously conveyed clear messages to the concerned governments, urging them to take the needed measures to avoid escalation and prevent the serious repercussions that may result from such provocative acts.



**Hissein Brahim Taha**

*Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation*

*I conveyed the Member States' concerns to the Governments of Sweden and Denmark as well as to the UN Secretary-General and the Chair of the UN Security Council. I made it clear to them that those provocations had reached an alarming level*

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Chief Editor & General Supervisor  
**Wajdi Sindi**

Editor  
**Bashir Sa'ad Abdullahi**

Layout & Design  
**Mohamed Abdelqader Qalaba**

Advisory Board  
**Amb. Tareg Bakheet**  
**Hassan Basri Arsalan**

Revision  
**Dr. Abdelhamid Salhi**

Translation  
**Amgad Hassan**  
**Yahya El-Khatib**  
**Mohamed Essatti**

Address:  
Madinah Road, P.O. Box 178,  
Jeddah-21411, Saudi Arabia  
Tel: 012 6515222 Fax: 012 6512288  
Telx.: 601366 Islami SJ.  
Website: [www.oic-oci.org](http://www.oic-oci.org)

For comments, enquiries  
E-mail: [journal@oic-oci.org](mailto:journal@oic-oci.org)

**OIC Permanent Observer  
to the UN New York Office**

320 East - 51st Street  
New York 10022  
New York, USA  
[www.oicun.org](http://www.oicun.org)

**OIC Permanent Observer  
to the UN Geneva Office**

ICC-20, Route Pre-Bois - Case Postal 1818  
CH 1215, Geneve, Suisse  
[www.oic-un.org](http://www.oic-un.org)  
[oic@oic-un.org](mailto:oic@oic-un.org)

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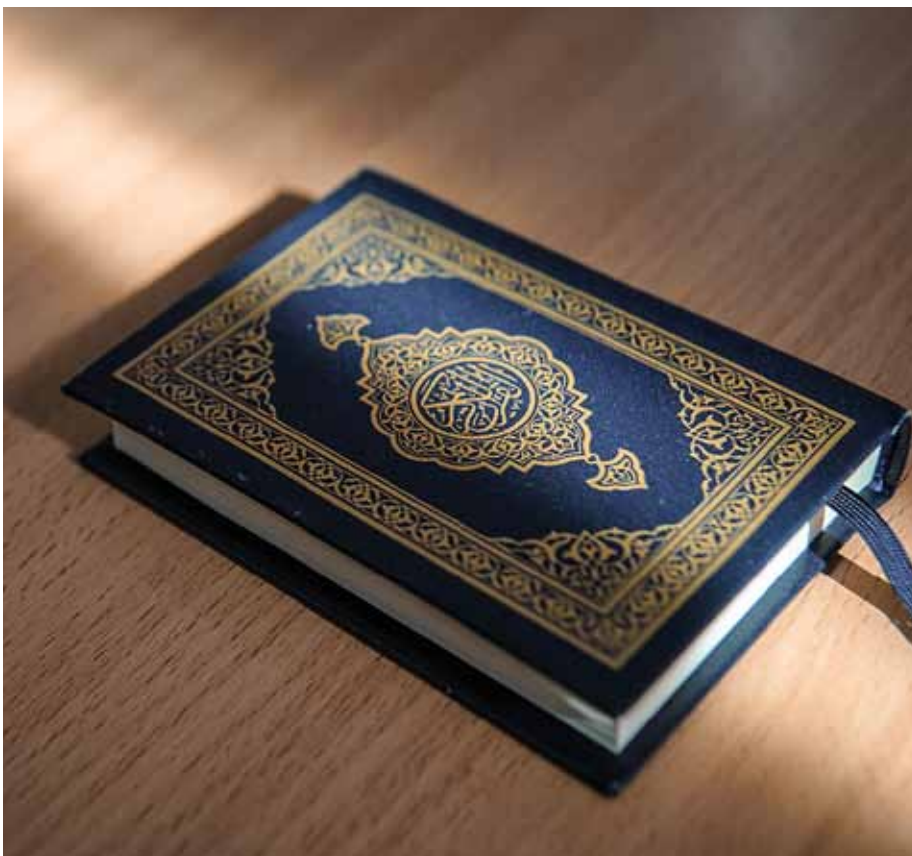
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## OIC Extraordinary CFM on Desecration of Copies of the Holy Quran Urges Member States to Take Any Actions they Deem Appropriate in their Relations with the Countries Where these Violations are Taking Place



The Resolution on the Repeated Crimes of Desecration and Burning of Copies of the Holy Quran in Sweden and Denmark, adopted by the 18th Extraordinary Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers held on July 31, 2023, urged the Member States to consider taking any necessary decisions and actions they deem appropriate in their relations with the countries where such acts of desecration and burning of the Holy Quran are taking place, such as in Sweden and Denmark. These actions concern the political field, including recalling their ambassadors in the two countries for consultation, or the economic, cultural or other fields, to express their rejection of the repeated abuse of the sanctity of the Holy Quran and other Islamic symbols. The Resolution also commended the measures taken by Member States in their relations with Sweden and Denmark as part of condemning this crime.

The Council mandated the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Houssein Brahim Taha, to take concrete steps to review the official framework linking the General Secretariat to any country in which the Holy Quran and other Islamic symbols and sanctities are desecrated with permission from the authorities of the concerned country, including suspending the status of the Special Envoy. It welcomed, in this regard, the decision of the Secretary-General to suspend the status of the Special Envoy of Sweden to the OIC until the Swedish authorities take the necessary measures to criminalize incidents of insulting Islamic sanctities and symbols, and prevent their recurrence.

The Resolution strongly condemned the despicable acts of violation of the sanctity of the Holy Quran, deplored the recurrence of such acts, and deeply regretted the continued issuance by the Swedish authorities

of permits allowing these acts to occur, and the failure to take the necessary measures in Sweden and Denmark to prevent their perpetration. It considered that the two countries' authorities' failure to take measures to prevent the recurrence of such acts runs counter to the UNSC Resolution 2686 (2023) adopted on June 14, 2023 pertaining to international tolerance, peace, and security.

The Resolution condemned all attempts to denigrate the sanctity of the Holy Quran as well as other sacred books, values and symbols of Islam and other religions under the garb of freedom of expression, which goes against the spirit of articles 19 and 20 of the ICCPR. It called upon the international community to unanimously stand against those provocative attempts.

The Resolution called on the UN Secretary-General to appoint a 'Special Rapporteur on Combating Islamophobia'. It also called for holding an ordinary meeting of the OIC Executive Committee on Islamophobia to take stock of the vile attacks against Muslims and sacred Islamic symbols, including the desecration of the Holy Quran, and to follow up on the conclusions and resolutions of the previous meetings of the Executive Committee and the Council of Foreign Ministers, in coordination with the General Secretariat and in consultation with the Member States. It called on the General Secretariat to expedite the implementation of the 'Plan of Action for Combating Islamophobia', adopted by Ministers of OIC States Members of the Contact Group on Peace and Dialogue on the sidelines of the 74th UNGA session in New York.

The Resolution urged the General Secretariat to exert more efforts to coordinate and cooperate with the relevant Islamic organizations, in order to engage in implementing the above-mentioned Plan of Action designed to more effectively address the negative repercussions of Islamophobia in general, while implementing the relevant provisions of the Makkah Al-Mukarramah Document, adopted by the 48th CFM held in Islamabad, Pakistan in 2022.

## Wide-ranging Action in Response to Desecration of Islamic Sanctities

The Extraordinary Meeting of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers adopted a Resolution to dispatch an OIC delegation led by the Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, in order to meet the European Union Commission to convey the OIC Member States' strong condemnation of the crime of Holy Quran desecration, and to call on it to take the necessary actions to prevent the recurrence of such criminal acts under the pretext of freedom of expression.

The Resolution also called on the OIC Member States' ambassadors in the capitals where vile acts against the Holy Quran and other Islamic sanctities are perpetrated to make collective efforts at the level of national parliaments, media, civil society organizations, as well as governmental institutions, in order to convey the OIC's stance and urge the relevant authorities to take the necessary legislative actions to criminalize such violations, cognizant of the fact that the exercise of freedom of expression carries with it certain duties and responsibilities.

In the same context, the Resolution called on all OIC Overseas Missions in the concerned international organizations to which they are accredited (New York, Geneva, and Brussels) to take the initiative in standing against these acts of hatred against Islam and its sacred symbols and sanctities in the interpretation of the relevant conventions as well as in the formulation of new international legal texts to that end. It also called on Muslim civil society organizations in Member States to team up with their counterparts in countries where similar violations are taking place, to resort to local courts and exhaust domestic remedies, and, if need be, to file cases before international judicial bodies.

The Resolution assigned the OIC Group in New York and Geneva to continue informing the relevant UN organs of the continuous violations against Islamic symbols and sanctities. This involves pursuing efforts, when necessary, to have the United Nations issue resolutions condemning and criminalizing attacks on the Holy Quran and other divine books and calling for respect for religions and cultures and spreading a culture of peace and dialogue among religions, like the UNHRC Resolution 53/1. It also involves



requesting the holding of formal and informal meetings in these bodies to address these issues, after coordination within the OIC Group and with the General Secretariat. The Resolutions instructed the OIC Group in the capitals where such blatant acts were perpetrated as well as in international organizations, especially the European Union, to take the necessary actions for referring this Resolution to the Foreign Ministries and the relevant bodies in those countries and organizations and to clarify the grave consequences of persisting in insulting Islamic symbols and sanctities. It also instructed the OIC Group in New York to take the necessary actions for referring this Resolution to the relevant organs of the United Nations to issue it as an official document of the United Nations, and to request them to include this issue on their agenda pursuant to Article 1 (3) of the UN Charter which calls for "promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion";

The Resolution called on the General Secretariat to assign its relevant missions to coordinate with the OIC Group in the concerned countries and organizations in which the OIC is represented to hold conferences or seminars dealing with dialogue among religions, cultures, and peoples. These conferences may also involve international organizations and European and non-Islamic non-governmental organizations seeking to deepen their knowledge about Islam and its teachings.

The Resolution reaffirmed the importance of the Eight-point Action Plan unanimously agreed upon under the UNHRC Resolution 16/18, being an essential step in the United Nations toward combating incitement to hatred, discrimination, stigmatization, and violence based on religion or belief. It called on all Member States to review the progress made in implementing the Action Plan and to make every effort to maintain the international consensus around this important OIC initiative.

## Call on Swedish and Danish Authorities to Take Actions to Prevent the Repeated Desecration of the Holy Quran



The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, renewed his call to the Swedish and Danish authorities to take formal measures to prevent the recurrence of acts of desecration and burning of the Holy Quran, and expressed his disappointment that no measures have so far been taken in this regard.

The Secretary-General's call came in his speech at the opening of the 18th Extraordinary session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers, under the presidency of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, Chair of the 49th session of the CFM. The meeting was held virtually, on July 31, 2023, to discuss the repeated acts of desecration and burning of copies of the Holy Quran in Sweden and Denmark.

At the outset of his speech, the Secretary-General expressed his deep appreciation to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, current Chair of the Islamic Summit and Chair of the OIC Executive Committee, as well as to the Republic of Iraq, for convening the extraordinary session of the CFM, devoted to examining the incidents of desecration and burning of copies of the Holy Quran. He noted that

this initiative reflects the special interest that the two countries attach to this issue, and their keenness to come out with a unified position in the face of these reprehensible acts that represent a deliberate expression of religious hatred and intolerance.

The Secretary-General pointed out that the session was held in line with the provisions of the Final Communiqué issued by the Extraordinary Open-ended Meeting of the OIC Executive Committee, convened on July 2, 2023 at Saudi Arabia's initiative, regarding the burning of a copy of the Holy Quran in Sweden.

The Secretary-General reiterated his deep appreciation to the States and international organizations that condemned the acts of desecration and burning of the Holy Quran and those that adopted or supported the UNHRC Resolution. He added that pursuant to the mandate entrusted to him by the OIC Executive Committee, he conveyed the concerns of Member States to the Government of Sweden, to the UN Secretary-General, and to the Chair of the UN Security Council. He explained that the nature of these provocations had reached an alarming

level, expressing the disappointment of the OIC countries that the concerned authorities continued to issue permits that allowed such acts to be committed.

The Secretary-General called on the Swedish authorities to consider the seriousness of the issue for the Islamic world and its repercussions on the image of Sweden and its relations with the OIC Member States. Pursuant to the same mandate, the Secretary-General suspended the status of Sweden's Special Envoy to the OIC and informed the Swedish government thereof. The Swedish Foreign Minister, in turn, stated that his country's government rejects desecration of Islamic sanctities, including the Holy Quran, and is keen to maintain good relations with the OIC Member States.

In this regard, the Secretary-General affirmed that the OIC has much respect for the Swedish and Danish peoples, especially that these acts were committed by an extremist minority. At the same time, he expressed his disappointment that the concerned authorities in the two countries had not taken any formal action to prevent the recurrence of these provocative acts.

## Preparatory Meeting to Extraordinary CFM on Holy Quran Desecration Reviews Relevant OIC Efforts



The Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, H.E. Amb. Yousef Al-Dobeay, delivered the OIC statement at the opening of the Senior Officials Meeting preparatory for the 18th extraordinary session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers, held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on July 30, 2023.

Amb. Al-Dobeay renewed the General Secretariat's deep appreciation for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Chair of the 14th Islamic Summit, as well as for the Republic of Iraq, for their initiative to convene this extraordinary CFM session to discuss an issue to which Member States and Islamic peoples attach special importance. He commended the two countries' keenness to come out with a unified position with regard to this issue.

Amb. Al-Dobeay welcomed all participants at the opening of the Senior Officials Meeting preparatory for the 18th Extraordinary Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers on the repeated incidents of desecration and burning of copies of the Holy Quran in Sweden and Denmark. "We have recently followed with deep concern," he said, "the recurrent incidents of desecration of Islamic sanctities, especially the burning of copies of

the Holy Quran, in a number of European countries, especially in Sweden and Denmark. These acts constitute a manifestation of religious hatred and intolerance."

Amb. Al-Dobeay noted that the General Secretariat and the OIC countries have always rejected these acts, issued statements condemning their perpetration, warned against the grave consequences of these provocative acts, and called on the authorities of the concerned countries to take the necessary measures to prevent their recurrence.

Since January 2023, the Executive Committee has held two meetings devoted to looking into these incidents, and adopted two important Communiqués that included a number of recommendations.

The 49th session of the Council of Foreign Ministers, held in Nouakchott, Mauritania also adopted resolutions in this regard.

For his part, the Secretary-General held extensive contacts with senior officials of member and non-member states and senior officials of international organizations to raise awareness of the seriousness of this issue.

The General Secretariat has consistently

placed this issue on the agenda of meetings and political consultations with officials of partner countries and international organizations.

The OIC missions in New York, Geneva, and Brussels, and the OIC Group of Countries in New York and Geneva, undertook intensive activities and valuable initiatives to inform the organs in the concerned organizations of the persistent attacks against Islamic symbols and sanctities, which can only feed hate speech and violent extremism, and to explain the position of the OIC and its expectations from the international community in terms of condemnation and criminalization of desecration of the Holy Quran and Divine Books. The latest of these initiatives culminated in a recent debate in the United Nations Human Rights Council, which resulted in the adoption of Resolution 53/1.

In view of the escalation and gravity of the incidents of desecration of the Holy Quran and other Islamic symbols, convening an Emergency Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers is of particular significance, and reflects the Member States' determination to come out with a unified position.

## Consultations with Member States on Incidents of Holy Quran Desecration



The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, held a telephone conversation, on July 7, 2023, with the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Shehbaz Sharif. The conversation addressed the latest incident of desecration of a copy of the Holy Quran in Sweden, and the OIC's response through the convening of an extraordinary meeting of the Executive Committee under the Chair of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The Secretary-General briefed the Prime Minister on the deliberations of the Extraordinary Meeting. In this connection, the Prime Minister informed the Secretary-General of the adoption, on July 6, 2023, by Pakistan's two-house Parliament, of a resolution demanding the Swedish Government to take action against the perpetrator of such vile act that can in no way be justified under the pretext of freedom of speech. The Prime Minister also asked the Secretary-General to conduct efforts through the United Nations against such despicable acts.

The OIC had followed, on June 29th and on July 20th and 23rd, the incidents of desecration of copies of the Holy Quran in Sweden

and Denmark. The Secretary-General condemned in the strongest terms the burning of a copy of the Holy Quran by an extremist group in front of the Iraqi Embassy in the Danish capital, Copenhagen. He expressed deep resentment toward the repeated incidents of desecration of Islamic sanctities, which constitutes an incitement to religious hatred, intolerance and discrimination, and warned of the serious consequences of these incidents.

The Secretary-General recalled the content of the Final Communiqué issued by the OIC Executive Committee at its extraordinary meeting held on July 2, 2023, which indicated that such provocations are contrary to the spirit of articles 19 and 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and cannot be justified under the pretext of freedom of expression or opinion. He further stated that the right to freedom of expression and opinion involves certain responsibilities under international law, which clearly prohibits any incitement to religious hatred, intolerance, and discrimination. The Secretary-General stressed the importance of the Resolution on "Counter-

ing religious hatred constituting incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence", recently adopted by the United Nations Human Rights Council.

The Secretary-General urged the Danish government to take the necessary measures to prevent the recurrence of such provocative acts and avoid their repercussions.

The Secretary-General had also condemned in the strongest term another provocative act of desecration of a copy of the Holy Quran, committed on July 20th in front of the Iraqi Embassy in Stockholm. He expressed his deep disappointment at the fact that the Swedish authorities continued to issue permits, despite the alarming consequences of the despicable act of desecration.

The Secretary-General underlined the need to comply with international law, and urged the Swedish authorities to stop issuing permits for extremist groups and individuals, in order to prevent the recurrence of these provocative acts. He also urged the Swedish Government to take the necessary measures to avoid escalation and further repercussions.

## OIC Calls on Media in Member States to Counter Islamophobia

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) commended the adoption by the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) of the Resolution on “Countering Religious Hatred Constituting Incitement to Discrimination, Hostility or Violence” as a significant milestone towards strengthening the collective and determined efforts to reject religious intolerance and desecration of Divine Books. The Resolution was adopted following the urgent debate at the 53rd session of the UNHRC upon a request by the OIC Group of Countries in Geneva, in response to a series of provocative acts of desecration of copies of the Holy Quran in a number of European and other countries.

The Resolution condemned the recent premeditated acts of desecration of the Holy Quran, and underscored the need to hold the perpetrators of these acts of religious hatred to account in line with obligations of States arising from international human rights law.

The Resolution urged the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to speak out against advocacy of religious hatred. It requested the Human Rights Council to identify drivers and manifestations of religious hatred and the existing gaps in laws, policies, practices and law enforcement that impede the prevention and prosecution of public and premeditated acts, and to propose measures aimed at countering acts of religious hatred that hinder the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The Resolution also encouraged States to adopt national laws and policies designed to prevent and counter acts and advocacy of religious hatred.

For its part, the OIC has continued to urge the international community to stand firmly against the repeated incidents of desecration of Divine Books, and the rise of xenophobia, Islamophobia, racism, faith-based discrimination, hate speech, and incitement to violence. It has called for the condemnation and rejection of the abhorrent Islamophobic acts, which constitute incitement to hatred, exclusion and racism, and clearly undermine inter-religious harmony, dialogue and peaceful coexistence among diverse communities. It has stressed that these premeditated acts

can in no way be accepted under the law, nor can they be justified or conflated with the exercise of the right to freedom of expression or opinion.

The OIC indicated its strong belief that the UNHRC’s adoption of this historic resolution will usher in a new era in terms of dialogue and collective efforts to curb the manifestations of religious hatred and incitement to violence. In these challenging times, there is an urgent need to unify efforts for upholding the values of tolerance and peaceful coexistence among peoples and civilizations.

Following the adoption of the Resolution, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, commended all the States that had sponsored and supported the draft resolution. He also commended the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, current Chair of the Islamic Summit and Chair of the OIC Executive Committee, for its commitment and initiative to convene an emergency meeting of the Executive Committee to discuss this matter, which led to the successful debate at the UN Human Rights Council. He reiterated the OIC’s call on the international community to stand firm against the manifestations of discrimination, intolerance, and incitement to hatred, and to unite in upholding the values of tolerance and peaceful coexistence among peoples and civilizations. He also urged the international community to ensure the implementation and follow up of the Resolution recently adopted by the UN Human Rights Council.

On the other hand, the OIC General Secretariat called on public and private media in Member States to direct their cinematic, TV, radio, and journalistic projects and Social Media toward producing contents to combat Islamophobia and desecration of religious symbols, and to highlight and promote the sublime principles of Islam which call for coexistence, tolerance, and respect for the other, and reject violence, intolerance, and hatred.

This call came in the OIC statement delivered by the Director of the OIC Information Department, Mr. Wajdi Ali Sindi, at the Emergency Meeting of the OIC States Broadcasting Union (OSBU), held virtually on July 5, 2023, to discuss a mechanism for confronting desecration of religious sanctities in the



media, following the incident of burning a copy of the Holy Quran in the Swedish capital.

Mr. Sindi indicated that the Final Communiqué of the Emergency Meeting of the OIC Executive Committee, regarding the incident of burning a copy of the Holy Quran in Sweden, held on July 2, 2023 at the headquarters of the General Secretariat, included 26 items that constituted a roadmap and a coherent plan in response to the recurrence of incidents of desecration of the Holy Quran and other sacred religious symbols. The Communiqué called for collective efforts at the level of national parliaments, the media and civil society organizations, to pronounce the OIC’s position in this regard, and urged the relevant authorities to take the necessary legislative measures to criminalize such violations.

Mr. Sindi pointed out that through its Information Department and the Islamophobia Observatory as well as its media organs, including COMIAC, OSBU, and UNA, the OIC is making great efforts, jointly with its partners, to enhance understanding of the responsible use of freedom of expression in the media, and to establish a national mechanism to hold accountable some media outlets that continue to feed hate speech and intolerance. The OIC is also working on implementing the OIC Media Strategy to Combat Islamophobia.



## Emergency Meeting Following First Incident of Holy Quran Desecration

The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Hissein Brahim Taha, called on Member States to take a unified position and collective measures to prevent the recurrence of incidents of desecration of copies of the Holy Quran and denigration of the noble Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). This call was made during the Extraordinary Open-ended Meeting of the OIC Executive Committee, held on July 2, 2023 at the headquarters of the General Secretariat in Jeddah, to discuss actions towards the repercussions of the incident of burning a copy of the Holy Quran that took place in front of the Central Mosque in the Swedish capital, Stockholm, on the first day of Eid al-Adha. The Executive Committee meeting was held at the request of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, current Chair of the Islamic Summit and Chair of the OIC Executive Committee.

The Secretary-General said in his speech to the meeting: "Unfortunately, on the first day of that auspicious occasion, when all Muslims around the world were celebrating the Eid, a despicable act of desecration of a copy of the Holy Quran was committed outside the Central Mosque in Stockholm, capital of Sweden". He noted that the meeting was held to discuss the appropriate response, and stressed the need to send a clear message that acts of desecration of the Holy

Quran and insults against the noble Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and other Islamic symbols were not to be viewed as mere ordinary Islamophobia incidents. He underlined the necessity to continuously remind the international community of the need for the urgent enforcement of international law, which clearly prohibits any advocacy of religious hatred.

The Final Communiqué issued by the Extraordinary Meeting of the Executive Committee strongly condemned the recent despicable violation of the sanctity of the Holy Quran in Sweden, on the first day of Eid al-Adha outside the Central Mosque in the capital city of Stockholm. The Committee deplored the recurrence of acts of desecration of the Holy Quran, and deeply regretted the authorities' issuance of permits allowing that act to take place.

The Communiqué requested the Secretary-General to send a letter on behalf of the OIC Member States to the Swedish Government, and to consider dispatching a delegation to Stockholm and the EU Commission to express the condemnation of the incident of burning a copy of the Holy Quran, and call on them to take the necessary measures to prevent the recurrence of that criminal act under the pretext of freedom of expression. The Communiqué condemned all attempts

to denigrate the sanctity of the Holy Quran and other sacred values and symbols of Islam under the garb of freedom of expression, which runs counter to the spirit of Articles 19 and 20 of the ICCPR, and called on the international community to stand against those provocative attempts.

The Communiqué called on the OIC Member States' Ambassadors in the capitals where such vile acts against the Holy Quran and other Islamic sanctities are perpetrated to make collective efforts at the level of national parliaments, media, civil society organizations as well as governmental institutions, to express the OIC's stance as well as to urge the relevant authorities to take the necessary legislative actions to criminalize such attacks, cognizant of the fact that the exercise of freedom of expression carries with it special duties and responsibilities.

The Communiqué called on all the OIC Overseas Missions (New York, Geneva, and Brussels) to take the initiative, in the international organizations to which they are accredited, to counter these acts of hatred against Islam and its symbols and sanctities in the interpretation of the relevant conventions as well as in the formulation of new international legal texts to this end.

## Member States Call on OIC to implement “Action Plan for Combating Islamophobia”

The OIC Executive Committee called on the General Secretariat to expedite the implementation of the “Action Plan for Combating Islamophobia”, adopted by Ministers of OIC States Members of the Contact Group on Peace and Dialogue on the sidelines of the 74th UNGA session in New York.

The Final Communiqué issued by the Emergency Meeting of the Executive Committee regarding the incident of desecration of the Holy Quran in Sweden reaffirmed the importance of the eight-point Action Plan unanimously agreed upon under UNHRC Resolution 16/18, being a significant step in the United Nations in countering incitement to hatred, discrimination, stigmatization, and faith-based violence. It also called on all Member States to review progress in the implementation of the Action Plan and to make all efforts to maintain international consensus on this important OIC initiative.

The Communiqué reaffirmed the essential role of political commitment at the highest level for the full and effective implementation of the UNHRC Resolution 16/18, and encouraged States to pay particular attention to the importance of criminalizing incitement to violence based on religion or belief, while recognizing the positive role of open and constructive debate and of mutual respect and dialogue among religions. It called on all governments to fully implement the existing legal and administrative framework and adapt new legislation, if need be, consistent with their obligations under international law, norms, and standards to protect all individuals and communities against hate and violence based on religion and faith, and to ensure the protection of places of worship.

The Communiqué referred to the UNHRC Resolution 34/36 of 24 March 2017, in which the Council requested the elaboration of Complementary Standards to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) to ensure the commencement of negotiations on the draft additional protocol to the Convention criminalizing acts of racist and xenophobic nature, such as Islamophobia.

The Communiqué called on the Secretary-General to send a letter to the UN Secretary-General and the Chair of the Security Council, urging them to issue statements of condemnation and rejection of denigration of religious symbols and sanctities, which feeds hatred, violent extremism and terrorism. It also called for mutual respect for all religions and beliefs and for promoting a culture of peace and tolerance.

The Communiqué tasked the Islamic Group in New York and Geneva to keep sensitizing the relevant UN organs of the continuous violations against Islamic symbols and sanctities, which feed hate speech and violent extremism. It also assigned the Islamic Group in world capitals (especially the capitals in which vile acts of desecration of the Holy Quran and other sacred Islamic symbols took place) and international organizations, especially the European Union, to take the necessary actions to refer this Communiqué to the Foreign Ministries and the relevant bodies in those countries and organizations, and clarify the grave consequences of persisting in denigrating Islamic symbols and sanctities. The Communiqué called for continuing to include the item of “Combating Islamophobia” on the agenda of the meetings of the OIC Islamic Group with countries and international and regional groupings. It assigned the Islamic Group in New York to take the necessary measures to refer this Communiqué to the relevant UN organs to issue it as an official document of the United Nations, and to request them to include this issue on their agenda under the provisions of Article 1(3) of the UN Charter, which calls for promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.

The Communiqué also assigned all OIC Member States in Geneva to immediately draw the attention of the Human Rights Council to the recent blatant attack on the sanctity of the Holy Quran in Sweden, by calling for an urgent discussion at its ongoing 53rd session and all its coming sessions, and to submit a resolution to address the



recurrence of these unfortunate incidents and identify and confront the motives and manifestations of this serious human rights issue in a systematic and institutional manner, while keeping the matter under review. The Communiqué renewed its call to the Secretary-General to take immediate steps to strengthen the Islamophobia Observatory within the General Secretariat, by transforming it into a Department for Combating Islamophobia and Promoting Dialogue and Communication, allocating the necessary resources to enable the Observatory to work effectively, implement concrete programs on the ground, and facilitate its connection with other centers and mechanisms concerned with monitoring Islamophobia around the world, and to publish its periodic reports in a professional manner.

## Secretary-General Attends Meeting of the Global Coalition to Defeat Daesh



The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, attended, on June 8, 2023 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, the Ministerial Meeting of the Global Coalition to defeat Daesh/ISIS.

In his statement to the meeting, the Secretary-General reiterated the principled position of the OIC rejecting all forms of terrorism, and highlighted the efforts it has been undertaking to combat this phenomenon. He underscored the OIC's support for all international and regional efforts aimed at preventing violent extremism and combating international terrorism with the aim of securing global peace and security. He also drew attention to the urgent need to address the root causes and key factors underlying violent extremism and terrorism.

The Secretary-General commended the sincere efforts exerted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United States of America, and the members of the Global Coalition to Defeat Daesh in order to counter terrorism and violent extremism. He reaffirmed the OIC's readiness to remain engaged in any form of cooperation to-

ward building a stronger global partnership for combating extremism and terrorism. On the other hand, the OIC Assistant Secretary-General, H.E. Amb. Yousef Al-Dobeay, addressed the opening session of the UN High-Level Conference of the Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies in the Member States, convened under the theme of "Addressing Terrorism through Reinvigorated Multilateralism and Institutional Cooperation."

Furthermore, the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) held, jointly with the Permanent Observer Mission of the OIC and the Permanent Observer Mission of the African Union in New York, a side-event on the issue of counter-terrorism and cooperation among regional organizations in this regard.

During the period from May to August 2023, the OIC condemned a number of terrorist operations that took place in some of its Member States, and expressed its firm position denouncing terrorism, whatever its source or manifestation.

The OIC General Secretariat strongly con-

demned the attack, on May 27, on the Ugandan peacekeeping forces deployed in Bullo Marir, Somalia, as part of the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS). It also strongly condemned the terrorist attack, on July 24, 2023, against the Gali Siad Military Academy in Mogadishu, and the attack that occurred on the Tunisian island of Djerba on May 9, 2023, causing the death of a number of security personnel and visitors.

The General Secretariat strongly condemned the terrorist attacks on a school in western Uganda on June 16, killing and injuring scores of people. It also strongly condemned the terrorist attack committed by gunmen, on June 3, 2023, on villages in the north of Nigeria, killing 30 people.

The General Secretariat condemned in the strongest terms the explosion that took place on July 30, in the Tehsil of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Bajaur District, in Pakistan, leaving tens of people dead and injured. It also strongly condemned the heinous attack that targeted a public transport bus in the Senegalese capital, Dakar, on August 1, causing several deaths and injuries.



## British Report: Right-wing Extremism is the Next Most Serious Threat

The British government considers “right-wing extremism” as the next most serious threat to the country after the terrorism committed by Islamist groups, with the Home Office believing this makes up nearly 22% of attacks since 2018, a quarter of MI5 cases, and 28% of those detained for terrorism-related offences.

With regard to the extremism attributed to Islamist groups, the CONTEST review notes that there is a “diminishing” link between perpetrators and “explicit affiliation and consistent ideological alignment” with any one group. This is due to the “relative decline” of al-Qaeda and - to a lesser extent - the Islamic State (ISIS), also known as Da’esh.

The shrinking number of Islamist figures and the growing online world mean that there are more “cases and complaints from a wide variety of sources that become influences and motives” for terrorists.

For British right-wing extremists, there is less organization compared to Islamist terrorists, according to a new Home Office review. Rather than formal groups with a leadership structure and plans for territorial grabs, far-right groups tend to consist of “informal online communities that facilitate international connections”.

The British Home Secretary, Suella Braver-

man, said that the threat of terrorism is “escalating”, and indicated that a strategic review says that “Islamist terrorism” is, in her words, “the main threat”. The Minister was speaking following the Government’s Counter-Terrorism Strategy update, in which Islamist and Christian right-wing extremism were highlighted as the two main threats to the UK.

The Home Secretary said as the government published a review of its Counter-Terrorism Strategy (CONTEST), which was updated for the first time in five years, the threat from terrorism was “on the rise”.

“We now face a homegrown terrorist threat that is less predictable and difficult to detect and investigate, a persistent and evolving threat from Islamist terrorist groups abroad, and an operating environment where technology continues to present both opportunities and risks to our counterterrorism efforts,” Ms. Braverman said. “So we believe that the threat of terrorism is rising again.” In a speech accompanying the release of the report, Ms. Braverman added that the rise was from a “lower base”, and the risk is “not as high as a few years ago”.

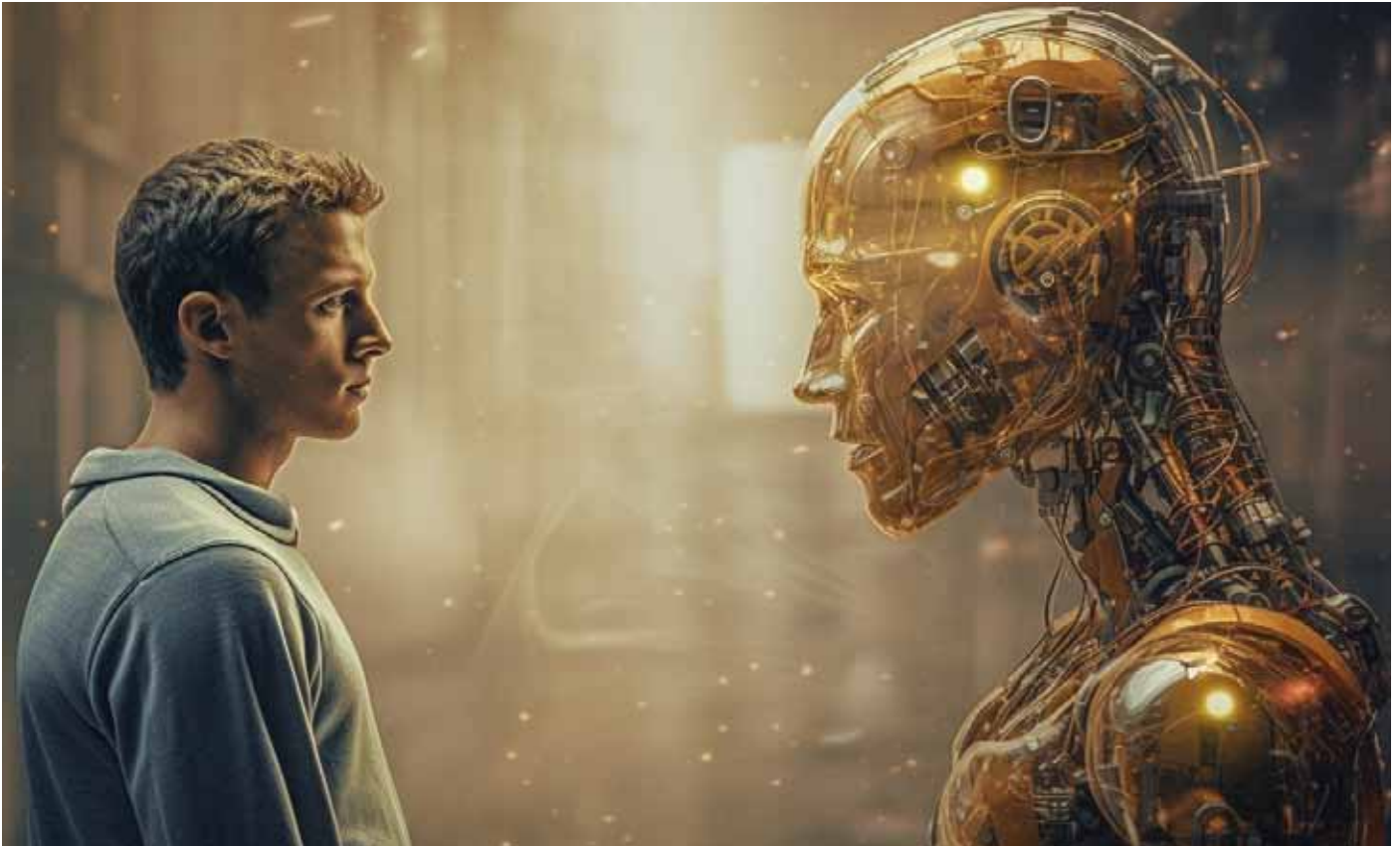
The CONTEST strategy has been around since 2003, and was last updated in 2018 following the five terrorist attacks in 2017, which included the Manchester Arena

bombing and the London Bridge attack. Since then, there have been nine terrorist attacks, killing six people and wounding 20, and 39 other attacks were disrupted, according to the Interior Ministry.

On the other hand, the Secretary-General of the Islamic Universities League, Dr. Sami Al-Sharif, underlined the importance of seeking all possible ways to ensure the promotion of a culture of tolerance and harmony among peoples of different religions. He also stressed the need to reject all attempts of distortion and contempt by some countries, groups and individuals against those who have different visions and orientations, especially in view of the developments and events the world is currently witnessing and the acts of terrorism and intimidation perpetrated by those who are hiding behind the cloak of religion.

In this regard, Al-Sharif noted that the media are at the forefront of the institutions that can undertake this work, being capable of shaping opinions and trends and directing global public opinion. The media should, therefore, engage in highlighting the foundations of the tolerant moderate religion that rejects all forms of terrorism and intolerance, based on the fact that difference is a universal principle that everyone should respect and should act in accordance with it.

## Virtual Characters Play an Influential Role on Social Media Platforms



Berlin - Taylan Gökalp

The artist, who attracted a wide audience on Social Media platforms, appeared in a remarkable way, to say that she did not sleep all night, because she was busy with intense work in the office. In that way, this artist, who is one of the famous influential figures, attracted the sympathy of viewers. "I drew some nice things," she says, looking intently at her laptop, pen in hand, with a stack of magazines surrounding her.

What is not revealed by the image of the artist "Emma" is that she is not really a Japanese woman as she appears; she is not even a human being. Watch her videos, you will soon understand that this character was created by a computer program!

O Inc., the company that developed "Emma", says this character is Japan's first virtual model. However, she is not the only virtual model on the Internet, as many have appeared on various Social Media platforms, especially in Asia. And just like real models, they can be found on the covers of fashion magazines, and in advertisements for products, while others can be seen at concerts,

thus attracting thousands of viewers.

To enhance the optical illusion surrounding "Emma", the influencer regularly shares photos with her followers on Social Media platforms, showing her interacting with real people. In addition to flying between fashion capitals and sharing with other "Social Stars", "Emma" shares her feelings with her 400,000 followers.

She once wrote under a photo of herself, wearing a wide hood, holding a black umbrella, and looking sad, "Since I was born I hate being alone, what do you do when you feel lonely?" In another post, she talks about an argument between her and her brother.

These emotional expressions show that the creators of "Emma" are pushing the boundaries of what we expect from the virtual world, and creating a personal connection to "Emma", by deliberately portraying their creative personality that can experience a state of human frailty, just as humans are.

This trend seems to be working, if we take her hundreds of thousands of followers on Instagram as an indicator of her popularity.

When asked about the artificial fabrication of an emotional world for "Emma", the creators of Emma's character said that even real influencers are occasionally accused of fabricating life situations that draw sympathy. After all, they added, people spend so much time in digital spaces to the extent that the boundaries with reality are constantly blurred. "Everything we see online and in the media is kind of narrative, and each individual has the choice to believe or not to believe it." However, this model of emotional admiration, stemming from interaction with artificial objects different from humans, raises many problems, according to media analyst Dr. Oliver Zöllner, Professor at the Stuttgart Institute for Digital Ethics. He would like to see more transparency about the software being used, and said that not everyone can immediately realize that virtual influencers are not real people. Not everyone is familiar with the models that companies apply to extract data from followers, and how these data are exploited.

## Reality Media

The word “reality” seems closer to believability, as there is nothing more expressive than reality itself. That is why when what is known as “Reality TV” appeared, first in the United States of America, it was something impressive. The so-called Reality TV programs began at the beginning of the millennium. This type of programs was widely popular, because it depicted - hour by hour - the daily life of the “heroes” of those programs, and reflected the minute details of what happened throughout the 24 hours of the day, even the hours of sleep. This realistic aspect has also been reflected in talk-shows that are not bound by the rules governing traditional programs that are prepared in advance; they monitor the spontaneous reactions of guests that may sometimes turn to fights and brawls, the very thing that attracts large audiences.

This type of programs seems to have been well received by the public after decades of watching monotonous programs that were carefully prepared in advance. Remarkably, however, Reality Programs were themselves influenced by “the impact of the camera”. In one of his lectures, the late Egyptian philosopher Dr. Abdel-Wahab El-Messiri described the impact of the video-camera in weddings and how it has affected the spontaneity of these ceremonies. In fact, aware of the presence of the camera in the wedding, the guests often change their behavior, having realized that all their acts and gestures are “monitored”. Their reactions are, therefore, no longer spontaneous, as they now take into consideration the image that the camera will pick up, showing their figure, behavior, elegance, and sometimes their “artificiality”.

Reality Media has gone beyond traditional Reality TV programs, such as the Star Academy program in its Arabic version, and other Arab programs that captured the minds of viewers from 2003 to 2016. Now, a more “severe” reality has emerged following the spread of the new understanding of the camera and its evolution toward more inquisitiveness. This is, of course, in addition to the spread of Social Media platforms that, over time, have provided applications that give their users the opportunity to continuously display the details of their daily lives, without the need for a studio or a subscription. This attractive method has turned into a means for profit-making. Some have even gone as far as transforming themselves into a “media material”, even if this involves violating the ethical and deontological standards of the public image, which, once released, becomes accessible to all.

Media work has now transformed from a scene prepared by producers, program editors, actors, and technical teams, into a (short- or long-form) live image that a YouTuber or Blogger can capture on a flight, in the street, or in a ministry. Some consider this monitoring of daily life as a manifestation of freedom of expression and a means of alerting society to certain deficiencies that need to be addressed.

Reality Media might, however, lead to a chaotic, undisciplined and temporary impact, not only because it is an individual work, but also because it is largely influenced by the culture and understanding of the one who releases the video. In other words, it reflects what reality should be like in his own point of view. He, in fact, monitors a small detail in society and turns it into a public-opinion issue or a “Trend” which remains a subject of controversy for a period of time, and soon fades away with the rise of another issue or a small scandal that, together with other scandals, produce a mix of feelings infused with anger, resentment and tension.

Any follower of the series of disharmonious and short clips will find himself watching a video, prepared in a simple and non-professional manner, about a fabricated attack of a crocodile on an elephant, or a “cocktail” of short videos combined into one scene, or a street brawl in an American city, involving men and women, over who has priority on the road, or a girl – a “Fashionista” – showing off the latest fashion, followed by a quick explanation of how to prepare a Mexican “Fajita”, and so on.

After an hour of watching, the follower discovers that he is moving between unorganized, randomly prepared clips that do not carry any beneficial cultural or media content. Many of the tragic scenes, human disasters, and serious political issues are often transformed into leisure material that is not much different from wearing makeup, preparing Sushi, or finding an easy way to open cans.

Reality Media, via small mobile phone screens, produce content that is contradictory, inaccurate and instantaneous, carrying individual, non-specialist views that cannot be relied on or considered as critical media. What is worse is that this type of media seeks to provoke temporary reactions that quickly fade away. It does not cover the overall picture of a given event; it rather cuts off a small part of the story to produce negative impressions and create a misled public opinion, based fully on the effect of a video of one person that can be shared with the broader group to which this person belongs. It pushes the follower to look at each event separately, while making him lose his ability to link and analyze events. In that way, it facilitates the task of demonizing or belittling this or that party, or presenting it in an incomplete image that the YouTuber seeks to convey in order to satisfy his whims, based on inadequate information.



**Aiman Abboushi**  
Editor of the OIC Journal

*Media work has now transformed from a scene prepared by producers, program editors, actors, and technical teams, into a (short- or long-form) live image that a YouTuber or Blogger can capture on a flight, in the street, or in a ministry*



## Extraordinary Meeting of OIC Executive Committee: Israeli Violations have Exceeded all Limits

The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, said that the violations in the occupied city of Al-Quds coincided with a serious escalation in the Israeli crimes against the Palestinian people, including the recent Israeli military aggression on the Gaza Strip, which resulted in 36 martyrs. He pointed out that the number of Palestinian martyrs over the past six months has risen to about 180, in addition to hundreds of wounded Palestinians.

This was part of the Secretary-General's statement at the Extraordinary Open-ended Meeting of the Executive Committee, held by the OIC General Secretariat on May 24, 2023, at the OIC headquarters in Jeddah, at the invitation of the State of Palestine and the Kingdom of Jordan, to discuss the persistent Israeli attacks on the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque. The Secretary-General said that the meeting is taking place at a time when everyone is aware of the seriousness of the situation experienced by the City of Al-Quds and its Islamic and Christian holy sites, its stationed people, its civilizational identity, and its religious and historical status, as a result of the attempts of Israel, the occupying power, to

impose illegal facts on the ground; the aim being to Judaize the Holy City, isolate it from its Palestinian surroundings, and prevent its return to the Palestinian sovereignty.

The Secretary-General stated that the OIC has been following the serious Israeli escalation and the targeting of both Islamic and Christian holy sites in the occupied city of Al-Quds, especially the desecration and storming of the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque by groups of extremist settlers and senior Israeli officials, with the protection of the occupation forces, especially the recent provocative visit of the extremist Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir to Al-Aqsa Mosque. This is in addition to holding a meeting of the Israeli occupation government in a tunnel under Al-Aqsa Mosque, and the organization of the so-called provocative "Flag March" in the neighborhoods of the occupied city of Al-Quds.

The Secretary-General warned again of the serious consequences of the persistent brutal Israeli aggressions on the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque, which constitute a violation of the sanctity of holy places and freedom of worship, an attack on the Palestinian people and their sanctities, and a prejudice to the

feelings and beliefs of Muslims all over the world, in flagrant defiance of the relevant charters, agreements and UN resolutions. These aggressions, he added, can only fuel violence and tension and undermine security and stability in the region.

The Secretary-General stressed that the gravity of the Israeli violations of international law, which have exceeded all limits, require immediate international action. He reaffirmed, in this regard, the responsibility of the international community to put an end to the Israeli violations, being a threat to global peace and security.

The Secretary-General welcomed the international reactions rejecting and condemning this provocative visit by the extremist Israeli minister to the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque. He also stressed that the city of Al-Quds is an integral part of the Palestinian territory occupied in 1967, and the capital of the State of Palestine, and that all decisions made and actions taken by the Israeli occupation to Judaize the occupied city of Al-Quds have no legal effect and are considered null and void under international law and the international legitimacy resolutions.



## Final Communiqué of OIC Executive Committee: The Provocative Acts in Al-Aqsa are Void and Illegal

The OIC Executive Committee held an extraordinary open-ended meeting on May 24, 2023, at the headquarters of the OIC General Secretariat in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, at the request of the State of Palestine and the Kingdom of Jordan, to discuss the serious developments in the occupied city of Al-Quds, following the storming of the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque by a minister in the Israeli government, guarded and protected by the Israeli occupation forces.

The Final Communiqué issued by the meeting affirmed that the Israeli minister's storming of the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque and violation of its sanctity constitute a provocative act that should be condemned in the strongest terms, and represents a flagrant and unacceptable violation of international law and the existing historical and legal status in Al-Quds and the holy sites. This provocative act is a serious escalation that requires the international community, including the Security Council, to work immediately to stop it through effective steps that would compel Israel, the occupying power, to cease its attacks on the Palestinian people and its violations of international law and international humanitarian law, and not to make any

provocative practices in Al-Quds that would offend the feelings of millions of Muslims around the world, and threaten security and stability in the region. The Member States stressed that Israel has no sovereignty over Al-Quds and the holy sites, and that East Al-Quds is an occupied Palestinian land.

The Communiqué confirmed that the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque, with its entire area of 144 dunums, is a place of worship purely for Muslims, and that the "Al-Quds Endowments and the Blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque Affairs Department", affiliated to the Jordanian Ministry of Awqaf, Islamic Affairs and Holy Sites, is the legal authority with exclusive jurisdiction to manage all affairs of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and organize access to it. It further affirmed the right of the State of Palestine to sovereignty over the occupied city of East Al-Quds, and that Israel, the occupying power, has no right nor sovereignty over the occupied city of Al-Quds and its Islamic and Christian holy sites.

The Communiqué condemned in the strongest terms the Israeli occupation government's setting a dangerous precedent by holding its meeting in a tunnel, which is part one of the illegal Israeli network of

tunnels and excavations, located adjacent to the Western Wall of the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque, a few days after the government approved its sponsorship of the condemned "Flag March" that stormed the neighborhoods of the Old City of Al-Quds under the protection of the occupation forces. The meeting stressed that such provocative and illegal acts are null and void and have no legal effect.

The Communiqué underlined the importance of pursuing the concerted efforts of the Member States to protect the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Islamic and Christian holy sites in the occupied city of Al-Quds, the capital of the State of Palestine, and to support the steadfastness of the Palestinian citizens of Al-Quds in the face of the aggressive Israeli policies and practices aimed at controlling the city, changing its original Arab character and identity, altering its existing historical and legal status, and imposing the temporal and spatial division on the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque. It further affirmed support for the Hashemite Custodianship over the Islamic and Christian holy sites in Al-Quds and its role in protecting the city's Arab, Islamic and Christian identity.



## OIC Acts at Global Level in the Face of Israeli Violations

The OIC General Secretariat submitted, on July 27, 2023, written submissions to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) regarding the legal consequences arising from the policies and practices of Israel in the occupied Palestinian territory, including the eastern part of Al-Quds, pursuant to the mandate assigned to the ICJ by the UN General Assembly, requesting an advisory opinion in this regard. In these submissions, the OIC indicated that the Israeli policies and practices in the occupied Palestinian territory constitute gross violations of the human rights guaranteed by international law, and stressed that the Israeli colonial occupation of the Palestinian territory is illegal, violates international law and relevant UN resolutions, and must stop immediately. The OIC also reaffirmed its absolute and unwavering support for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination, the right of return, and the right to establish their independent State on the 1967 borders, with Al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital.

In the same context, the OIC welcomed the European Parliament's appeal, launched on July 13, 2023, to European nations to recognize the State of Palestine and safeguard the two-state solution. The Parliament's statement also highlighted the need to put an end to the Israeli occupation and to cease

all settlement activities, being illegitimate. It expressed support to the International Criminal Court's continued efforts to examine war crimes and crimes against humanity perpetrated in the occupied Palestinian territory.

The OIC expressed gratitude for this historic stance, and urged EU countries to recognize the State of Palestine with East Al-Quds as its capital, based on the borders of June 4, 1967, which would support international endeavors to achieve a just, comprehensive, and lasting peace based on the two-state solution in line with the relevant UN resolutions.

On June 5th, the OIC commemorated the anniversary of the Naksa day. On that day in 1967, Israel, the occupying power, carried out a military attack and occupied the Palestinian and other Arab lands, the repercussions of which are still continuing with the Israeli crimes and policies of forced displacement, ethnic cleansing, colonial settlement, land confiscation, house demolitions, and denial of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

The anniversary of the Naksa coincided this year with the escalation of the Israeli occupation's crimes, attacks and systematic violations, through the practice of organized state terrorism and crimes against humanity, the perpetration of brutal attacks against the

Palestinian people and their land and sanctities, the implementation of policies aimed at Judaizing the city of Al-Quds and changing its geographical and demographic character, and the attempts to alter the historical and legal status of the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque, all in flagrant violation of the principles of international law, the Charter of the United Nations, and the relevant UN resolutions.

While paying a resounding tribute to the steadfast Palestinian people and reaffirming its support for their just struggle in all its forms, in defense of their land and sanctities, the OIC affirmed, in a statement issued on this occasion, that the Israeli crimes are imprescriptible, and that the policy of changing facts on the ground will never gain any legitimacy, nor will they weaken the determination of the Palestinian people to continue their just struggle towards achieving their aspirations and legitimate rights.

On May 15th, the OIC commemorated the 75th anniversary of the Nakba of the land and the people of Palestine, following the establishment of Israel, the colonial occupation power, and the accompanying ethnic cleansing and systematic state terrorism committed against the Palestinian people, with over 51 massacres having claimed the lives of about 15,000 Palestinian citizens, and the forced displacement of over 950,000 others.



## 13 Israeli Crimes in 4 Months, Dozens of Martyrs, and Destruction of Infrastructure in Jenin

During the period between May 2023 and the date of publication of this issue of the OIC Journal, 13 Israeli crimes were committed in various Palestinian cities, claiming the lives of dozens of Palestinian martyrs, and injuring many others. A large number of houses and infrastructures were demolished, especially in the city of Jenin, in addition to the confiscation of lands and the storming of the courtyards of the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque.

The OIC strongly condemned these crimes against the Palestinian people, committed during a short period of 4 months only. It undertook several actions, and held an emergency meeting of the OIC Executive Committee in May 2023, especially following the Israeli attacks on Jenin.

On August 7th, the occupation forces committed a horrific crime in Jenin which claimed the lives of three Palestinian martyrs in their vehicle. This crime was accompanied by the escalation of organized terrorism practiced by extremist Israeli settler gangs against Palestinian citizens, their land and property, which led to the death of a Palestinian martyr and the wounding of others in the town of Burqa, near the city of Nablus. On July 27th, the extremist minister of the Israeli occupation government, Itamar Ben

Gvir, stormed into the courtyards of the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque and violated its sanctity under the protection of the Israeli occupation forces. The OIC considered this act a provocation to the feelings of all Muslims, and a flagrant and unacceptable violation of international law.

On July 25th, the Israeli occupation forces assassinated three young Palestinians in the city of Nablus. On July 22, they executed two young men: Fawzi Mokhalafa in the town of Sebastia near the city of Nablus and Muhammad al-Bayed in the town of Um Safa near the city of Ramallah.

On July 11th, the Israeli occupation forces seized the Sub Laban family's home in the occupied city of Al-Quds, as part of the continued policy of Judaization, colonial settlement, forced displacement of Palestinian families, confiscation of their property, and home demolitions, which constitutes a flagrant violation of the international humanitarian law and the international human rights law.

On July 4th, the occupation forces committed war crimes in Jenin and its camp, including displacement of families amid an atmosphere of intimidation, destruction of infrastructure, acts of killing, in addition to preventing medical person-

nel from performing their work, and targeting journalists to prevent them from reporting what is actually taking place. On July 3rd, the occupation forces committed crimes in the city of Jenin and its camp against unarmed civilians, medical personnel and health centers, in addition to the destruction of infrastructure and the demolition of homes and mosques.

On June 22, gangs of settlers and Israeli occupation forces committed crimes against several Palestinian towns, causing many Palestinians to be martyred or injured, and vehicles, houses and property to be burnt or damaged.

On June 19th, the occupation forces waged a real war through the continued bombardment of the eastern side of Jenin, leaving four martyrs and dozens wounded. On June 6th, the two-year-old Palestinian child, Mohammed Al-Tamimi, was shot dead by the occupation forces. On June 3rd, the occupation government decided to establish 6 settlement outposts in the Masafer Yatta area, south of Hebron. On May 22nd, the occupation forces killed 3 Palestinians in Nablus, and on May 9th, they killed 13 Palestinians, including 10 children, and injured 20 Palestinian citizens.

## Holy Qur'an Suffuses Malaysia's Museum with the Spirituality of History



Located in Kuala Lumpur, the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia (IAMM) is home to a selection of ancient, unique and rare Quranic manuscripts showcased in a section devoted to manuscripts and Qur'ans. The museum is one of the largest museums of Islamic art in Southeast Asia. Officially inaugurated on December 12, 1998, it is located in the heart of the city's tourist belt that includes the Perdana Botanical Gardens, the famous National Mosque, the Bird Garden, and the National Planetarium.

The museum includes a number of specialized exhibition halls, most notably the Qur'an & Manuscript Gallery. The Qur'an and manuscript collection offers an integrated view of the development of Arabic calligraphy and Qur'an and manuscript decoration. It showcases the oldest fragments of the Holy Qur'an originating in North Africa. The collection includes a rare Qur'an written both in thuluth and Naskh scripts with wonderful ornaments. It dates back to the 10th century AH / 16th century CE, and was copied in Uzbekistan. As for the Mamluk Qur'an on display in the museum, it was not known before, so it is considered an important addition to the Mamluk Qur'ans held in Dar al-Kutub al-Mi riya (Egyptian National Library). It dates back to the 8th century AH / 14th century CE and is copied in Thuluth script; names of the surahs were written in Kufic script on a floral ground.

Another Mamluk Qur'an that can be added to the list of the Qur'ans is calligraphed in Mu aqqaq script. It was written in the 8th century AH / 14th century CE and attributed to Egypt or Syria. Of all the manuscripts kept in the museum, the most prominent is Dala'il al-Khayrat (Proofs of Good Deeds), which dates back to the Ottoman era, and

contains footnotes and comments from different periods. But the most beautiful artifact in the museum is the wooden panels used by children in Ethiopia to learn reading, writing and arithmetic in Quranic schools.

To complement the collections of manuscripts, the museum adds a set of writing tools including pencil cases that are unique to the museum and are made of various materials such as porcelain, the most prominent of which is a pencil case made in China in the 9th century AH / 15th century CE with blue floral decorations on a white background. A rare Kashmiri silver pencil case adorned with artfully engraved flowers and branches is also on display; its cover does not open from the top, but rather from the side. Another pencil case made of wood was decorated with floral drawings similar to Kashmiri textile patterns.

The Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia (IAMM) was erected on an area of 30 thousand square meters, a space that must be large enough to accommodate 8 thousand pieces that had been selected with great care. The museum distinguishes itself from other museums in the world by focusing on Islamic art in Southeast Asia and India, a region that has not received enough attention from researchers.

The most striking feature of this museum is the quality of the artifacts, such as a baby's cradle. The skill of the artists was evident in this rocking cradle, which dates back to the Ottoman era, and bears delicate floral motifs. Gilding added a touch to it, making it truly a masterpiece.

Another antique is the beard comb, which expresses the Mughal love of luxury. This silver-gilt comb is not just a work of art, but is also a clever deception as it is surmounted

by a pair of cheerful parrots flanking a stopper that can be opened and the comb filled with rose water.

### Malay World Gallery

The Malay world extends in an arc from southern Thailand, through the Malay Peninsula and Sumatra, and on to Java, Sulawesi and the southern Philippines. This archipelago has been the eastern frontier of the Islamic world for the past 500 years. The arts of the region consist of several traditions adapted to the tropical land. Southeast Asia was part of the greatest trading route the world had ever seen, surpassing the Silk Road in terms of quantity and quality, as it was the meeting place for different Asian empires as well as the new trading powers that emerged in the West.

Woodwork and metalwork are among the traditional arts that the Malay world is famous for, and the natural world has inspired craftsmen to decorate objects, whether for mundane use such as modesty discs for children, or for religious use such as windows of *ma r b* (prayer niches), *mashrabiya*s (oriel windows enclosed with wooden latticework) and Qur'an boxes. The vitality of concepts and the quality of execution played a significant role in the world of crafts within the Malay culture. This is especially true of the utensils used for hospitality, often taking the form of meticulously-crafted pairs of silver and brass trays and vessels.

Metalworkers possessed a high level of ability in producing weapons that range in size from women's daggers of small dimensions to huge throwing spears. Indonesian Kris daggers with wavy blades were forged in a distinctive shape that represented the spirit of warriors in Southeast Asia.

## A section Showcasing a Unique Mamluk Qur'an



Amazing heroic feats are still attributed to Indonesian daggers, which are believed to be capable of everything from shedding tears to easy flight, stabbing and swordsmanship. The use of natural forms is prevalent in the Islamic art of Southeast Asia, where we find many different subjects such as regenerative plants, fruits and clouds in different types of artworks like textiles with motifs often executed with some degree of abstraction, which enables them to be classified as part of the field of pure engineering. At the same time, handwriting was used to give a clearer picture of the expressions of religious beliefs.

### India Gallery

The prosperity of India in Islamic times goes back three centuries before the Mughal era (1526-1828). With the arrival of Babur, the founder of the Mughal Empire, the situation was ripe for the flourishing of Islamic art in India, as the ruling family was of Turkish and Mongol descent, and its most lasting contribution was reconciling the Central Asian and Indian cultures.

The Mughals left behind a comprehensive legacy of achievements, with all aspects of life having been embellished. They cared about fashion as much as they cared about jewelry, and their architectural achievements remain unique and unparalleled. The museum's Indian Gallery provides a glimpse into the public and private worlds of the Mughals.

Many features of Mughal art diverge from the Islamic mainstream. This is most obvious in the art of portraiture. While reveling in figural representation, the Mughal state pioneered a new approach to detail. The enduring charm of these miniature paintings is

partly due to their elegance and to the vivid glimpse they provide into the extravagant times. Miniatures from this era are filled with portraits of rulers, courtiers, and horses along with useful vignettes on fashion and interior design.

The Mughal Empire brought the realm of weaponry and shields to a new level, as it was rare that weapons were skillfully adorned in line with the tastes of the an-

*There are long-standing ties between Islam and China. According to Chinese records, Muslim emissaries visited the Tang emperor, only a few decades after the establishment of the Islamic Caliphate. The message of Islam was received with great enthusiasm in major Chinese trading centers such as Xian and Guangdong, and later in the western Chinese provinces.*

cestors of the Mughals from Central Asia. Jade stone had a special status with the Mughals, and it was used in countless numbers of dagger handles, which were often freed from jewelry and gold inlays.

### China Gallery

There are long-standing ties between Islam and China. According to Chinese records, Muslim emissaries visited the Tang emperor,

only a few decades after the establishment of the Islamic Caliphate. The message of Islam was received with great enthusiasm in major Chinese trading centers such as Xian and Guangdong, and later in the western Chinese provinces. During the Song Dynasty (960-1279 AD), mosques spread throughout China. During the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), Islam reached a high point in China, when Muslims gained unprecedented political influence. The meeting of the two greatest powers of that era led to a far-reaching exchange on the cultural and technical levels. As a result, Islamic art in China took on a special identity, whether it was used for internal use or for the huge export market. However, the unique contributions of Chinese Islamic art were largely neglected by art historians until recently, when it finally began to gain some attention.

One important area of Chinese art in which calligraphy played a relatively small role was ceramics. Ceramic goods were made for the local market, and they seldom included inscriptions in either Chinese or other languages, with the exception of goods produced during the Ming dynasty. These featured a distinctive style characterized by white and blue colors and incorporated Islamic inscriptions.

During the Ming period and beyond, China created a wide range of products that catered to the tastes of the export markets. Western forms, such as pen boxes, were created to meet the needs of overseas buyers. Glazed vessels were painted and decorated with religious or magical inscriptions, which were very popular. Muslims in China exported goods to different countries such as Anatolia, East Africa, Southeast Asia, and Persia.



## Secretary-General Meets Tunisian Foreign Minister

Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tunisia. The Secretary-General commended, on this occasion, Tunisia's significant role in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and in promoting joint Islamic action.

On May 11, 2023, the OIC Secretary-General met with H.E. Mrs. Oulimata Sarr, Minister of Economy, Planning and Cooperation of the Republic of Senegal. The meeting touched on a number of issues of common interest, including stability and development in Africa, the Palestinian Cause, and preparations for the 15th Islamic Summit Conference, scheduled to take place in The Gambia in December 2023.

The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, met, on May 17, 2023 in Jeddah, with H.E. Mr. Nabil Ammar, Minister of

## Secretary-General Meets EU Special Envoy to the OIC

The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received, on August 3, 2023, in his office, Amb. Patrick Simonnet, the European Union's Special Envoy to the OIC, as his tenure came to an end.

The meeting discussed prospects for cooperation between the OIC and the EU. It also addressed the repeated acts of desecration and burning of copies of the Holy Quran in Sweden and Denmark. In this regard, the Secretary-General highlighted the importance of the resolution issued by the Extraordinary Council of Foreign Ministers, held on July 31, 2023. For his part, the EU Special Envoy asserted that the EU Commission condemned these disgraceful incidents. Both sides stressed the importance of continuing dialogue



on this issue.

## Secretary-General Receives ASG of the Muslim World League



The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received, on July 24, 2023 in his office, H.E. Dr. Abdul Rahman Al-Zaid, Assistant Secretary-General of the Muslim World League (WML). Both parties discussed cooperation between the OIC and WML as outlined in their Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2020.

The Secretary-General commended the valuable efforts made by the League to highlight the teachings of Islam based on tolerance and moderation, and to promote dialogue and understanding among peoples. He stressed the significance of the Makkah Al-Mukarramah Document, issued by over 1200 Muslim scholars in May 2019 and adopted by the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers during its 47th session held in Niamey, Niger.

## Secretary-General Receives Director-General of SESRIC

The OIC Secretary-General (OIC), H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received, on May 22, 2023, the new Director-General of the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC), H.E. Ms. Zehra Zümürüt Selçuk, and wished her success in her mandate. The meeting discussed issues of mutual interest, including ways to scale up cooperation between the OIC General Secretariat and SESRIC.



## Snapshots



The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received, on July 18, 2023, H.E. Amb. Bandar bin Muhammad Al-Attiyah, Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the OIC, as his tenure came to an end.



The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received, on July 20, 2023, H.E. Mr. Rashid bin Saeed Al-Khayarin, the new Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the OIC.



The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received, on July 10, 2023, H.E. Amb. Eko Hartono, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Indonesia to the OIC, as his tenure came to an end.



The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received on June 19, 2023 H.E. Amb. Jaafar Muhammad Jaafar, the former Permanent Representative of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to the OIC.



The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received, on June 18, 2023, H.E. Amb. Muhammad Al-Qamudi Al-Hafi who presented his credentials as Permanent Representative of the State of Libya to the OIC.



The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received, on June 19, 2023, H.E. Amb. Nasser Kamali Dolat Abadi, Acting Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the OIC.

## Snapshots



The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received, on June 14, 2023, H.E. Ambassador Bello Kazaure Husseini, the new Consul General of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in Jeddah.



The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received, on June 13, 2023, H.E. Amb. Syed Mohammad Fawad Sher, Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to the OIC.



The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received, on June 12, 2023, H.E. Mr. Muhammad Saud Al-Mutairi, Consul General of the State of Kuwait in Jeddah and its Permanent Representative to the OIC.



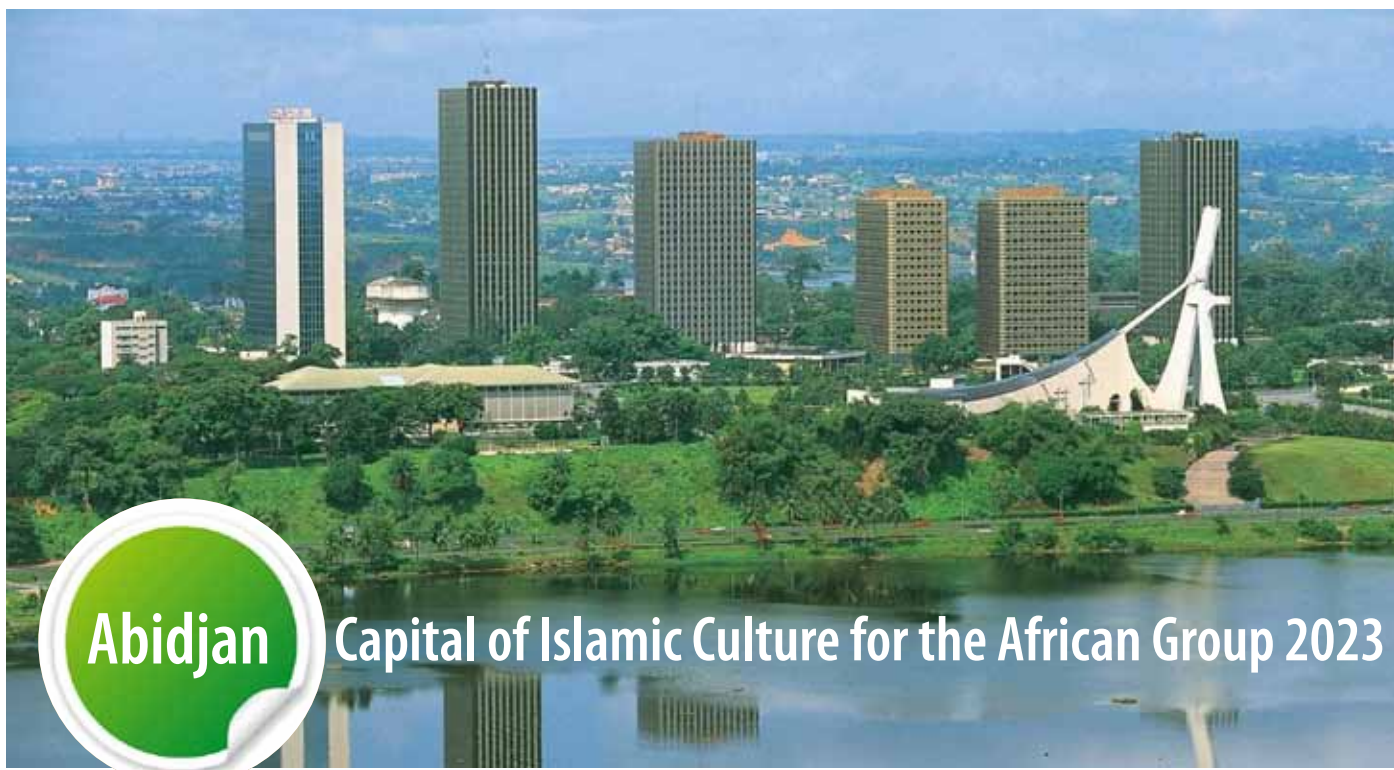
The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received, on June 11, 2023, H.E. Mr. Abakar Outman Djame, the new Consul General of Chad in Jeddah.



The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received, on July 30, 2023, Mr. Muhammad Samir Al-Naqshabandi, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Iraq to the OIC.



The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received, on August 1, 2023, H.E. Mr. Abdelaziz Branly Opoulou, Consul General of Gabon in Jeddah. Both sides discussed ways of enhancing cooperation.



Abidjan is the economic hub of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, and one of its most prominent cities. It was the country's capital in 1934, but that did not last for long as the official capital was transferred in 1983 to Yamoussoukro, pursuant to a decision by the country's legislature. However, Abidjan is still considered an important commercial center, with many government offices and embassies located in it.

Abidjan is the "Capital of Islamic Culture for 2023", representing the African Group, according to ICESCO's classification.

The city is located on a sea canal called the "Lagoon" that connects with the Gulf of Ghana. It grew following the establishment of the port in 1931 to become the capital of the French colonies in East Africa. It further developed after the establishment of the Vridi Canal in 1951 connecting the city with the Atlantic Ocean.

The port of Abidjan is one of the most vital export/import centers in West Africa, with the city producing auto parts, soap, cocoa beans, coffee, dates, vegetable oils, and other products.

Many Ivorian government institutions are still located in Abidjan and have not been relocated to the capital, Yamoussoukro. The President's office is located in Cocody, and the Parliament, the Constitutional Council,

the Supreme Court, and the Chancellery of the National Order are all located in Le Plateau.

The West Africa Stock Exchange, the main stock exchange for Côte d'Ivoire and the other seven countries of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA), is headquartered in Abidjan. The head office of "Air Côte d'Ivoire" is also located in Abidjan.

The rate of enrollment in education is 74%, and access to secondary education depends on entry assessment in the sixth form after which a third of the students are allowed to continue their studies. 24% of the students reside in Abidjan which constitutes 20% of the total population.

Abidjan is the city where the main Ivorian educational institutions are located. Among these are the Abidjan Classical High School and the Lycée Français Blaise Pascal. The Jean-Mermoz International School, founded by Pierre Padovani, has recently reopened.

Côte d'Ivoire has teams in various sports (basketball, athletics, rugby, handball, volleyball). Football is very popular in Abidjan, and ASEC Mimosas is one of the most famous football clubs in the country.

Abidjan is one of the largest French-speaking cities in the world. It is a commercial port and an important cultural center in

West Africa, and is described as the Capital of the Francophonie. The city is famous for its tourist attractions and traditional monuments. With large numbers of people from western countries visiting it, especially the French, Abidjan has earned the name of "Paris of Africa".

Abidjan has a population of more than 4 million, and is inhabited by African, Western and Arab communities. It is one of the main centers settled by the French colonizer – since the end of the 18th century – not only in the West African region but also in all of Africa.

Côte d'Ivoire, a beautiful country in West Africa, has always been one of the favorite tourist destinations in the African Continent. Abidjan is one of the main tourist cities that attract large numbers of visitors. This is due to several reasons, particularly the fact that Côte d'Ivoire boasts countless numbers of attractions and tourist sites that are worth visiting, including mountainous highlands, beach destinations, lakes and beaches overlooking the Atlantic Ocean in the south, and rainforest areas shrouded in fog, in addition to the magnificent tourist, architectural and cultural attractions in the country's major cities, such as Grand-Bassam, Abidjan, and Man.



## Five Ancient and Unique Quran Manuscripts in the Museum of Islamic Art in Qatar

The Museum of Islamic Art in Doha, Capital of Qatar, features an impressive collection of rare and precious manuscripts, including the famous Abbasid Blue Qur'an, one of the finest and rarest manuscripts in the Islamic

world, as well as pages from the largest Qur'an in the world, the Timurid Baysunghur Qur'an.

The Museum is home to some of the most beautiful and historic Qur'an manuscripts in the Islamic world. Hereafter is a brief presentation of five of these precious Qur'an manuscripts.

The Museum features a folio from a Timurid monumental Qur'an manuscript, from Samarkand (Uzbekistan), dating back to the 9th century AH/15th century CE, made of Gold, black ink, and opaque watercolour on paper, and including Sura Al-'Ankabut ("The Spider"), vv. 25-27.

Written in elegant muhaqqaq script, this page is from the largest medieval Qur'an ever made. For a long time, it was known as the "Baysunghur Qur'an", named after the illustrious Timurid prince and art lover, but more recently, it is believed that it was produced for his famous grandfather, the ruler Timur (r. 1370–1405 CE) himself. Only dispersed folios of the manuscript are surviving. Once complete, it would have required 1,600 pages and 2,700 square meters of paper to contain the full text of the Qur'an. Allegedly, the manuscript was prepared by the one-armed calligrapher Umar-e Aqta,

who first spent years producing a miniature Qur'an that would fit into a ring. When he presented this proudly to Timur, the great ruler thought the small size unworthy of the Qur'an. Relentlessly, the calligrapher then set about producing the largest Qur'an manuscript ever seen and presented it to Timur, who this time granted the appreciation the artist sought.

The Museum features a miniature copy of the Qur'an from Shiraz (Iran), in the 10th century AH/16th century CE, made of gold, ink, opaque watercolour on paper and leather binding.

Miniature Qur'ans had an important protective function for their carriers; small pieces of parchment with Quranic passages rolled in small pendants were used as early as the first centuries of Islamic history. Written in a flawless minute script known as ghubari (meaning "dust") with a sharp nib, this miniature Qur'an might have served its owner more as a protective device than an actual book to consult.

The Museum features a Qur'an manuscript from Java, Southeast Asia, made of ink and opaque watercolour on paper, dating back to the 13th–14th century AH/19th century CE.



# Manuscripts from Andalusia, Indonesia and the Mughal Empire

The division of the text of the 13th-century manuscript from Southeast Asia into juz' (parts), which are indicated by two semicircular arcs in the outer vertical margins of the two facing pages, suggests that this manuscript originates from the Indonesian island of Java.

Qur'an manuscripts produced in Southeast Asia present very distinctive and bright illumination. In particular, manuscript production in Java displays such a mesmerizing variety of styles and shapes of illuminated decorations that it is challenging to fit them into one single category. This manuscript opens and closes with two pairs of decorated frames that combine a variety of elements, vegetal motifs, architectural details, and sets of floral spikes around the margins in different combinations, making up a lovely and colorful effect.

The Museum of Islamic Art in Doha features a complete Qur'an manuscript, produced in China, made of Gold, ink, and opaque watercolour on paper, and dating back to the 11th – 14th century AH/17th – 19th century CE.

This manuscript is a fine example of Qur'an production in China, most likely produced during the Qing dynasty (1644–1911 CE). It is written in a variant of muhaqqaq script known as sini ("Chinese"), distinctive to that region. The verses are marked with red circles or dots, and the chapter headings are in red ink indicating the surah and the number of verses. The two pages shown are



the opening pages of the Qur'an; the page on the right is Surah al-Fatiha ("The Opening") and on the left Surah al-Baqara ("The Cow").

The pages are beautifully bordered with Chinese floral motifs using vibrant colors such as red, green and gold to stand out. The Chinese pagodas are what make this manuscript unique as well. The words within the pagodas on each corner say Qur'an Kareem ("noble Qur'an").

The Museum features a folio from the so-called "Pink Qur'an", produced in Southern Spain or Morocco, dating back to the 7th century AH/13th century CE, made of gold, ink, and opaque watercolour on pink-dyed paper, and featuring Surah Hud, vv. 40-41

This folio comes from an Andalusian Qur'an manuscript known as the 'Pink Qur'an', named after the color of its paper. Each page

contains five lines of text copied in dark brown ink with diacritical marks and verse markers in gold paint and diverse opaque watercolors. This manuscript is an exquisite example of how the maghrebi script had evolved. Maghrebi script has distinct features, such as large, round curved letters, and is usually written in dark brown or black ink with gold illuminations. The script was first developed in Al-Andalus and the Maghreb region — hence the name.

This rare example of dyed pink paper was probably produced in the city of Jativa (in what is today southeastern Spain), where the site of the earliest Spanish paper mill is located. The use of paper is an innovation for Andalusian manuscripts, as parchment was still the most common writing support used for Qur'ans during that time in the Iberian Peninsula.



## OIC and its Organs Continue to Support Development Projects in Afghanistan

A series of agreements have been signed for the implementation of a number of projects under the Humanitarian Trust Fund for Afghanistan. The agreements were signed between Member States of the OIC and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), being tasked – by a resolution from the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers – with creating, overseeing, and running the Fund in partnership with several other organizations and agencies.

The signing ceremony was held by the IsDB on May 12, 2023. It was attended by H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Dr. Muhammad Sulaiman Al-Jasser, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the IsDB Group, H.E. Mr. Sultan Al-Murshid, CEO of the Saudi Fund for Development, and H.E. Mr. Fahad Al-Osaimi, Director of the Emergency Relief Department at KSRelief in Saudi Arabia, in addition to H.E. Amb. Tarig Ali Bakheet, Special Envoy of the OIC Secretary-General to Afghanistan, and other representatives from international organizations and partners.

In his remarks on this occasion, the Secretary-General noted that this event would not have been possible without the strenuous and continuous efforts of the IsDB in

cooperation and coordination with the OIC General Secretariat. He extended thanks to Dr. Al-Jasser and his team and commended the close and valuable coordination between the IsDB and the OIC General Secretariat.

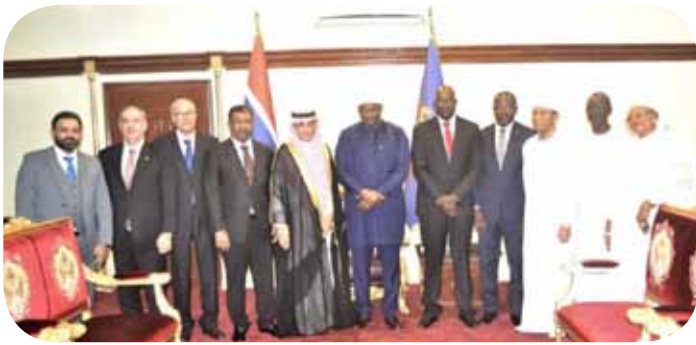
The Secretary-General conveyed his appreciation to Saudi Arabia for its unwavering and continuous support to the OIC. He commended, in particular, Saudi Arabia's generous contribution offered through KSRelief and SFD to support the Trust Fund for Afghanistan. He also commended the contributions offered by other Member States, and called on them to continue supporting the Fund, indicating that he will work to that end through the OIC. He also commended KSRelief for executing a joint program with the OIC Office in Kabul.

The Secretary-General stressed that the signing of agreements aimed at implementing specific humanitarian projects is a tangible expression of the OIC's commitment to humanitarian action in Afghanistan, noting that the sustainability of this active engagement requires mobilizing more financial contributions from member and non-member states, as well as from regional and international financial institutions.

The Secretary-General indicated that he and his Special Envoy to Afghanistan will pursue contacts with Member States in order to mobilize more support for the Fund and thus ensure continuous support for Afghanistan in the humanitarian and development fields.

The Secretary-General recalled the OIC Executive Committee's call, in its extraordinary meeting of January 11th, 2023, to coordinate with the Afghan de facto authorities in order to dispatch a mission from the Organization and relevant institutions, with the aim of taking stock of the technical and development needs, especially for small income-generating sectors and activities in this country. He stressed that the OIC is looking forward to the Islamic Development Bank taking the initiative to dispatch this mission as quickly as possible, given its experience and expertise in this field.

The Secretary-General concluded by affirming the OIC's commitment to implementing the mandate assigned to it by the resolutions of the Council of Foreign Ministers calling for providing humanitarian and development support to Afghanistan and pursuing constructive dialogue on other issues covered by these resolutions.



## Gambian President Receives OIC Delegation

A high-level delegation from the OIC General Secretariat, led by Mr. Yousef Al-Dobeay, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, paid a visit to the Republic of The Gambia, in response to the invitation extended to the General Secretariat to take stock of preparations for the upcoming 15th Islamic Summit, scheduled to take place in Banjul on December 16-17, 2023.

The Gambian President, H.E. Mr. Adama Barrow, received the delegation at the Presidential Palace and reassured them that The Gambia is doing everything possible to ensure that the event is a success.

Mr. Yousef Al-Dobeay expressed gratitude to the Gambian President for personally overseeing the progress of preparations, for his warm reception of the Delegation, and for his keen interest to ensure the success of their mission. He conveyed to the President the greetings and appreciation of H.E. Mr. Houssein Brahim Taha, OIC Secretary-General. The delegation also met with H.E. Amb. Lang Yabou, the Gambian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, who warmly greeted the delegation and expressed appreciation for the valuable support provided by the technical experts of the General Secretariat in order to make the summit a success. They also met with H.E. Mr. Ebrima Sillah, Minister of Transport, Labor, and Infrastructure, who

provided an update on progress toward completing the ongoing projects, particularly road development, as part of preparations for hosting the upcoming Summit.

The delegation met with the Executive Committee members responsible for organizing the Summit. They listened to briefings from officials from various sectors on logistical preparations for this event and highlighted many technical aspects necessary for the success of the Summit.

The two sides agreed to maintain communication to complete all arrangements.

## Senegal Foreign Minister Receives OIC Delegation to arrange for 12th session of COMIAC

H.E. Mrs. Aichta Tal Sall, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Senegalese Abroad, met on July 14, 2023, in the capital Dakar, with a high-level delegation from the OIC General Secretariat, led by H.E. Ambassador Tarig Ali Bakheet, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian, Cultural and Social Affairs.

The meeting reviewed bilateral relations between the OIC and Senegal, and discussed ways to further enhance them. It also addressed preparations for the 12th session of the Standing Committee for Information and Cultural Affairs (COMIAC), chaired by President Macky Sall, to be hosted by Senegal in October 2023.

## OIC Secretary-General Calls for Immediate Release of Nigerien President Bazoum

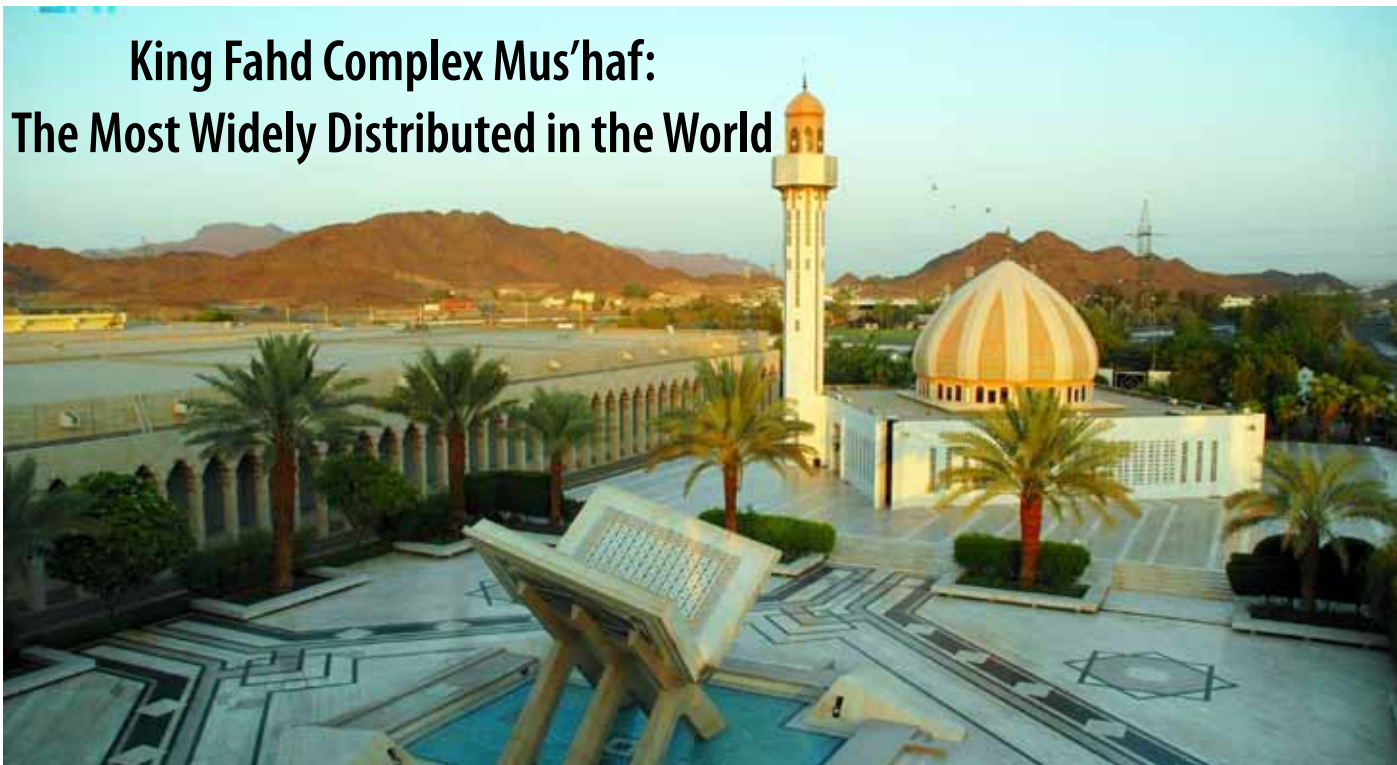
The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Houssein Brahim Taha, who is following with deep concern the developments of the situation in the Republic of Niger, and who has strongly condemned any attempt to seize power by force, called for the immediate release of President Mohamed Bazoum, Niger's democratically-elected President, and for ensuring the protection of his physical integrity and the restoration of constitutional order in Niger.

The Secretary-General underlined the importance the OIC attaches to maintaining peace, security and stability in Niger and in the entire Sahel region, and expressed his support for regional efforts toward that end. He reaffirmed his full solidarity with the people of Niger.

## Secretary-General Congratulates Africa on Commemoration of "Africa Day"

On the occasion of "Africa Day", observed every year on May 25th to commemorate the founding of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963, which became the African Union (AU) in 2002, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Houssein Brahim Taha, extended his congratulations to African countries and the African Union (AU).

## King Fahd Complex Mus'haf: The Most Widely Distributed in the World



The Mus'haf (Holy Quran) published by "King Fahd Glorious Quran Printing Complex" is the most widely distributed and circulated in the world. King Fahd Complex, located in Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah, Saudi Arabia, was established in 1982, and officially opened in 1984. H.E Minister of Islamic Affairs, Dawah and Guidance in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Sheikh Dr. Abdulatif bin Abdulaziz Al-Sheikh, is the General Supervisor of the Complex, which is headed by H.E. Secretary-General, Mr. Atef bin Ibrahim Al-Olayan.

The Complex has the largest printing press in the world exclusively devoted for the printing of the Holy Quran. In line with its vision, the Complex has the leadership in serving the Holy Quran and its sciences, translating its Meanings, and safeguarding the Quranic Text from distortion, through the optimal use of advanced technologies in the field of printing, audio recordings, electronic publishing, and digital applications. The mission of the Complex is to disseminate the Holy Quran as well as its sciences and the translations of its Meanings across the globe, as well as to support the initiatives and the research and scholarly projects that serve all aspects related to the Holy Quran and its sciences.

The Complex undertakes to print the Holy

Quran according to the well-known Riwayat (narrations) in the Islamic world, to record various recitations of the Holy Quran, to translate and print the meanings and interpretation of the Holy Quran into the most widespread languages, to promote Quran sciences, to conduct research and studies related to the Holy Quran and its sciences, to meet the needs of Muslims, within and outside Saudi Arabia, in terms of publications related to the Holy Quran, and to disseminate the Complex's publications on global networks and via digital applications and platforms.

The Complex continues to produce printed and recited versions of the Quran according to the well-known narrations and with the highest levels of accuracy, which requires advance preparations, scientific review, and technical arrangements. It also continues to translate and interpret the meanings of the Noble Quran into various languages, and to disseminate its publications to Muslims all over the world.

The Complex annually offers some of its publications as a gift from the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques to the Hajj pilgrims. It also works to promote Quran sciences, and pursues studies and research related to the goals of the Complex, while making publications available on the Internet using

the latest technologies. Its varied work and activities are continually developed through the various centers, committees, and departments of the Complex.

The Complex, which is open to Muslim visitors, organizes scientific seminars related to its goals, provides staff training inside and outside the Complex, and organizes Tajweed courses for memorizers of the Holy Quran. Modern technology is continually used to modernize the work of the Complex.

Recently, during the annual ceremony organized by the Ministry for participants in its activities during the blessed month of Ramadan, H.E. Dr. Sheikh Abdul-Latif Al-Sheikh honored "King Fahd Glorious Quran Printing Complex", represented by H.E. Mr. Atef Al-Olayan. This honoring came in recognition of the efforts exerted by the Complex's staff, and the successful performance of the Complex through the high-quality services provided to visitors and its significant contribution to the success of the programs implemented by the Ministry during the holy month of Ramadan.

On another occasion, the Secretary-General received H.E. Minister of Islamic Affairs, who inaugurated the "Qunbul narration", the Amharic translation, and a number of the Complex's projects.

## The Palestinian "Obaid": the Youngest Tour Guide in Sidon, Lebanon



Sidon – Wida Hamza & Amar Rajab (DPA)  
The Palestinian child, Abdel Rahman Al-Farran, aged 11, works as a tour guide for visitors to the city of Sidon from all over the world, and accompanies them on tours to see the historical sites in the city in which he was born.

Tourists are amazed at the young boy's passion and enthusiasm as he describes the features of the ancient civilization of this coastal city, located 30 km south of the Lebanese capital, Beirut.

Sidon overlooks the Mediterranean Sea, and is the third largest city in Lebanon. It is said that the Phoenicians were the ones who gave this name to the city, perhaps in reference to the fishing activity prevailing in it, or because the name means "fishing town."

"I am the youngest tour guide here," says Abdel Rahman, as he walks through the old neighborhood and the main market area of Sidon.

In an effort to help his family, the young Palestinian boy leads flocks of visitors to the area on weekends, walking confidently through the narrow alleys of Sidon's old marketplace.

Abdel Rahman greets everyone he meets on the street, thus showing to the visitors that he is admired by the local people in that

area.

Ahmed Badie, a salesman in the carpentry sector in the city, says, "Tourists come here and ask that this boy in particular accompanies them, because he knows very well every little thing in the city and can explain to them in detail the historical events that took place in it."

Abdel Rahman says that he has been performing this job, which he loves, since he was seven years old, and that he receives only half a million Lebanese pounds (about \$5) in exchange for accompanying visitors on a 15-minute tour.

His mother, Hoda, said that her son "loves history and, since his early childhood, he used to ask his father to tell him stories about the history of Sidon." She stressed that her son performs his job with love and passion. In his free time, he always looks forward to learning more about the city's history.

Abdel Rahman intervenes to say, "I know the story of each and every historical place in Sidon," adding that in order to master the skills necessary to perform his job, he had first to become a tourist himself, so he participated in tourist tours led by professional guides; and after learning a lot about the city's historical sites and monuments, he

felt himself ready to start organizing tours. Many of his customers come from other Arab countries, and some from foreign countries such as Germany, according to "Obaid", the name by which he introduces himself to tourists. "I love history," he says, "and I am always happy when I learn something new about our civilization."

What "Obaid" prefers to do is to accompany visitors to the Khan Sassi Archaeological Museum, located in the old town of Sidon, which features a collection of collectibles and artifacts of high value, dating back to several centuries. The museum is located inside an old building built of stones. Its construction, according to "Obaid", dates back to the Crusader period. "I want people to know everything about the history of Sidon," he says, "as many do not know anything about the history of this beautiful city."

There are many Palestinian children like Abdel Rahman living in Lebanon and their families live in one of the twelve refugee camps scattered around the country. It has become difficult for their parents to gain income to meet life necessities, as Lebanon is currently suffering from the worst financial crisis in centuries.

## Cairo Conference on Social Development Adopts Resolutions for Child Welfare and Empowerment of the Family Institution



The Second Ministerial Conference on Social Development was held on June 6, 2023, in Cairo, Egypt. The meeting was chaired by H.E. Dr. Nevin Riad Al-Kabbaj, Minister of Social Solidarity of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Chair of the current session of the Conference, and H.E. Mrs. Derya Yanık, Minister of Family and Social Services of the Republic of Turkiye, Chair of the first session, in addition to H.E. Mr. Houssein Ibrahim Taha, OIC Secretary-General, and H.E. Dr. Salim bin Mohammed Al Malik, Director-General of ICESCO.

In his speech to the Conference, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Houssein Ibrahim Taha, stressed that the resolutions adopted by the Conference are designed to address challenges facing the Islamic world and explore ways of supporting the concerned social groups and alleviating their suffering. He pointed out that this commitment stems from the values of Islam which attaches special importance to social issues, especially those related to the empowerment of the marriage and family institution, the preservation of family values, as well as child welfare issues, social security for the elderly, and the protection of people with special needs.

The Conference adopted an Omnibus Resolution on relevant social issues, along with the Cairo Declaration and the OIC Strategy for People with Disabilities.

The Secretary-General expressed deep gratitude to the Government and people of Egypt for their great and successful efforts to organize this important meeting of the Islamic world, and for the generous hospitality extended to all delegations on the land of Egypt, the country of hospitality, tradition, and generosity, and the cradle of civilizations and cultures. He also extended his sincere thanks and gratitude to H.E. President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi for his generous sponsorship of this conference, as an expression of Egypt's interest in social development issues which are closely related to achieving development in the Member States and ensuring social equality and well-being for their peoples. The Secretary-General also commended the efforts exerted by Turkiye during its Chair of the first session of the Conference, as well as its efforts in the field of social development.

The Secretary-General noted that the Conference took place amidst unprecedented challenges facing the Islamic world since the first session of the Ministerial Conference on Social Development in 2019, with many Member States having undergone economic, social and health crises and natural disasters that caused the displacement of millions of people, most of whom were women, children, elderly persons, and people with special needs and disabilities.

The conference, he added, is of particular

importance, falling in line with our endeavor to develop practical plans and strategies in response to these challenges, and to discuss ways to support the concerned social groups and alleviate their suffering. This commitment stems from the values of Islam which attaches special importance to social issues, especially those related to the empowerment of marriage and the family institution, and the preservation of family values, as well as child welfare issues, social security for the elderly, and the protection of people with special needs.

The Secretary-General pointed out that the OIC's interest in social and family affairs, and the political roles entrusted to it, reflect a comprehensive approach to the issues of the Islamic Ummah. This approach is designed, through multiple means, to enhance the different aspects of sustainable development sought by Muslim peoples. It falls in line with the Final Communiqué of the 14th session of the Islamic Summit Conference, held on May 31, 2019 in Makkah Al-Mukarramah, which affirmed that "the social dimension is one of the key pillars for achieving sustainable development, and that the means to achieve these goals is investment in social protection." It is also aligned with the relevant goals spelled out in the OIC-2025 Programme of Action.

## Secretary-General : Islam Asserts Women's Rights



The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, stressed that Islam recognizes the religious, social, economic, legal and political rights of women, and that the history of Islam testifies to the vital contribution of women in all areas of life. This was part of the Secretary-General's statement, delivered on his behalf by H.E. Amb. Tarig Ali Bakheet, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian, Cultural and Social Affairs, at the second ordinary session of the Ministerial Council of the Organization for the Development of Women in the OIC Member States, held on June 7-8, 2023, in Cairo, Egypt.

In her opening speech, Dr. Maya Morsy, President of Egypt's National Council for Women (NCW) reviewed her country's efforts in the field of women's empowerment. The opening session was also addressed by Dr. Afnan Al-Shuaibi, Executive Director of the Women Development Organization (WDO), who highlighted the Organization's efforts and activities during the previous period and since the convening of the third extraordinary session of the Ministerial Council of the Organization in 2022. She expressed her thanks to the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, and to the OIC General Secretariat for their continuous support for the Women Development Organization, so that it can achieve the goals for which it was established. She extended her thanks to all the OIC special-

ized and subsidiary organs for their support to and engagement with the Women Development Organization in the implementation of many programs and activities.

In his statement to the meeting, delivered on his behalf by Amb. Tarig Ali Bakheet, the Secretary-General stressed the OIC's keenness to provide all forms of technical support to the Women Development Organization, in order to contribute to the achievement of its goals, which are aligned with the OIC goals in terms of empowering women and enhancing their role in the development of Member States. He reiterated, on this occasion, his call on the OIC Member States that have not yet joined the membership of the Women Development Organization to expedite the completion of the necessary procedures for joining its membership by signing and ratifying its Statute.

The Secretary-General noted that the involvement of women in accelerating the pace of development in the Islamic world and in bridging the gap with the developed world is now an urgent necessity, especially in light of the challenges facing the Islamic world in the political, economic and social fields. Meeting these challenges requires adopting an organized and comprehensive approach at the national and collective levels in order to achieve the desired goals. The Secretary-General expressed hope that all efforts will be joined to advance the status

of women in Islamic societies.

The Secretary-General pointed out that the OIC believes that women are a full-fledged part of society and play a decisive role in sustainable development and the building of society, which cannot be achieved without women's participation. We should all, he added, defend their rights to education and training in all fields and at all stages, and leverage their abilities in all areas of social and practical life, including economy, trade, and political and economic decision-making. We are confident, he asserted, that women in the OIC societies are well aware of their rights and responsibilities. We should all provide full support to them so that they can best fulfill their role as equal partners in society.

The Secretary-General indicated that the OIC relies significantly on the role of the Women Development Organization, which began its work at its headquarters in Cairo, with 19 Member States having joined its membership.

It should be recalled that the Secretary-General had recently addressed the Foreign Ministers of the Member States that had not yet signed and ratified the WDO Statute, urging them to expedite the procedures for joining the membership of the Organization.



## Indonesian President Receives OIC Secretary-General in Jakarta

The OIC Secretary General, Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, paid official visits to two Asian countries : the Republic of Indonesia and the Kingdom of Thailand.

On August 7, 2023, H.E. Mr. Joko Widodo, President of the Republic of Indonesia, received, at the Presidential Palace in Jakarta, the OIC Secretary-General. The two sides reviewed relations between the OIC and Indonesia, and discussed ways of enhancing them. They also touched on key issues on the OIC agenda, the situation in the Islamic world, some current regional and international issues, and the OIC's role in promoting joint Islamic action.

The Indonesian President affirmed his country's full support for the OIC and its valuable efforts in the service of the Islamic world and its peoples. He also hailed the OIC's efforts and initiatives to counter the growing phenomenon of Islamophobia as well as the crimes of burning copies of the Holy Quran. In this regard, he stressed the need to support the OIC's efforts in the face of this phenomenon.

For his part, the Secretary-General hailed the vital role played by Indonesia in supporting the OIC's activities and programs in pursuit of its objectives to strengthen the bonds of Islamic solidarity among Member States and their peoples in all parts of the Islamic world. He touched on several vital and priority issues for the OIC and Indonesia, including supporting the Palestinian Cause, the situation in Afghanistan and ensuring the right to education for women in this country, the Rohingya issue, and the situation in Sudan and Niger. The two sides also

discussed current developments in the Sahel region and the importance of supporting educational, developmental, and agricultural projects in it.

During the same visit, the OIC Secretary-General met with H.E. Ms. Retno Marsudi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia.

The Secretary-General paid tribute to Indonesia's highest authorities and commended Indonesia's active role within the OIC. He briefed the Minister on issues that are high

With regard to Afghanistan, the Minister recalled Indonesia's efforts to assist the Afghan people. She put forward ideas on how to better support Afghanistan within the framework of the OIC.

Concerning Palestine, the Minister reiterated Indonesia's full support to the Palestinian people and reaffirmed the leading role incumbent on the OIC to work for restoring peace in Palestine and ensuring respect for the Palestinians' rights.

Both sides also touched on bilateral cooperation between Indonesia and the OIC, and agreed to explore other possible venues of cooperation.

As part of his official visit to Indonesia, the OIC Secretary-General and his accompanying delegation met, on August 7, 2023, with Dr. Kao Kim Horn, Secretary-General of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), at ASEAN headquarters in Jakarta. The two sides discussed bilateral relations between the two organizations and ways to enhance them. The Secretary-General expressed the OIC's aspiration to institutionalize cooperation with ASEAN through the implementation of projects of common interest to be agreed upon between the two organizations.

For his part, Dr. Kao Kim Horn welcomed the Secretary-General and his accompanying delegation. He highlighted the role of ASEAN in consolidating peace and security in the Southeast Asian region, and expressed readiness to discuss and identify areas of mutual cooperation in the fields of development, humanitarian work, peace and security.

*The Indonesian President affirmed his country's full support for the OIC and its valuable efforts in the service of the Islamic world and its peoples*

on the OIC agenda, including the situation in Afghanistan, the Palestinian Cause, Islamophobia, and the situation in the Sahel and Chad Lake.

For her part, the Foreign Minister of Indonesia stressed the need to firmly and strongly combat and prevent Islamophobia, and reaffirmed Indonesia's readiness to work closely with the OIC in this regard.



## Secretary-General and Japan's Prime Minister Discuss Muslim World Situation

The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, met, on July 16, 2023, in Jeddah, with H.E. Dr. Fumio Kishida, Prime Minister of Japan, who was on an official visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The meeting discussed the situation in the Muslim world and the issues on the OIC agenda, notably the Cause of Palestine, combating violent extremism and terrorism, the situation in Afghanistan and the Sahel region, and combating Islamophobia.

Both sides also discussed prospects of cooperation between the OIC and Japan in various areas, and ways to further enhance them.

The Secretary-General commended, on this occasion, the excellent relations between the OIC and Japan, and expressed his appreciation for Japan's active role in promoting development, sustainable peace, and dialogue among civilizations in the World.

On his part, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to Afghanistan, Amb. Tarig Ali Bakheet, held a series of meetings, on June 12-16, 2023, with senior government officials in Japan and with Japanese NGO officials operating in Afghanistan. He was accompanied by the coordinator of the OIC Afghanistan Humanitarian Trust Fund (AHTF), Eng. Jamal Al-Saati. In his meetings with the Japanese officials, Amb. Bakheet explained his mandate which involved humanitarian and political dimensions, as defined by the OIC Council of Ministers.

Amb. Bakheet held extensive discussions with senior officials from Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including H.E. Amb. Nagaoka, Director-General on the Middle East, Special Envoy of Japan to Afghanistan. The meeting focused on the OIC's long-standing commitment to deal with the Afghan de facto authorities in a bid to foster humanitarian assistance to the vulnerable Afghan society and seek acceptable ways of resolving contentious political and human rights issues that still arouse the concerns of the OIC and the broader international community. Amb. Bakheet and Mr. Al-Saati also held fruitful talks with the representative of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for Afghanistan and the heads of four other Japanese NGOs.



## Prime Minister of Thailand Receives the OIC Secretary-General

As part of his official visit to the Kingdom of Thailand, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, was received, on August 10, 2023, at the headquarters of the Thai Government in Bangkok, by H.E. General Prayut Chan-O-Cha, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand, in the presence of H.E. Deputy-Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand.

The Thai Prime Minister expressed his thanks to the Secretary-General for paying visit to Thailand, and emphasized the importance that his Government attaches to its partnership with the OIC and the attention it accords to the Muslim world. He recalled, in this regard, the various forms of support provided by his country to the OIC, especially the Islamic Solidarity Fund, and also to some OIC Member States. He stressed the importance attached to the situation of Muslims in Thailand and the efforts made by his Government to protect them.

For his part, the Secretary-General conveyed his respectful greetings to His Majesty King of Thailand, expressed his gratitude to the Prime Minister and his Government for their constant engagement with the OIC, and commended the active cooperation with the OIC General Secretariat and Member States. He also praised Thailand for being a model of peaceful coexistence between religious communities and for ensuring full integration of Muslims in Thailand.

The Prime Minister of Thailand and the OIC Secretary-General reviewed bilateral relations and exchanged views on ways to open up new prospects of cooperation for the OIC Member States, in particular in agriculture, education and training.

The OIC Secretary-General was also received, on August 9, 2023, by H.E. Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Deputy-Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand, for a working meeting attended by the delegations of the two parties.

The Secretary-General expressed his appreciation to the Government of Thailand, an OIC Observer Member, for its longstanding support to the OIC, for the protection of Muslims' rights in Thailand, as well as for its fruitful cooperation with many OIC Member States, mainly in Africa.



## OIC Renews Annual Consultations with the EU

The 6th Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) of the OIC-EU was held on June 13, 2023 in Brussels. The meeting was convened as part of the MoU signed in 2015 between the two sides. The OIC Delegation was led by Amb. Yousef Al-Dobeay, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, and included senior officials from the General Secretariat and OIC Observer Mission in Brussels.

The EU Delegation was headed by Mr. Carl Hellagard, Deputy Managing Director for the MENA Region at the European External Action Service (EEAS). Ms. Helene Le Gal, Managing Director for MENA, welcomed the OIC Delegation to the EEAS premises. The two sides exchanged views on a wide range of issues of mutual concern, including the situation in the Middle East, the Palestinian question, Afghanistan, Horn of Africa, Sudan, Somalia, the Sahel Region, and the Rohingya issue. The meeting also discussed potential cooperation in various areas, including culture, promotion of freedom of religion and belief, combating Islamophobia, women's empowerment, and humanitarian affairs.

The meeting highlighted the mutual desire for more political cooperation and coordination between the two organizations in multilateral fora, including in the UN, particularly in areas of mutual interest. Both sides explored prospects for strengthening cooperation in a number of areas, and decided to hold the 7th SOM in Jeddah next year.



## Kazakhstan Hosts First Ministerial Meeting of the OIC-15 Dialogue Platform

The First Ministerial Meeting of the OIC-15 Dialogue Platform was held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on May 25-26, 2023 at the premises of Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, known internationally as the educational and scientific hub of Kazakhstan. The meeting, held in hybrid format, brought together Science and Education Ministers and high-level officials from the most advanced OIC countries in the field of science, technology and innovation.

In his statement on behalf of the OIC Secretary-General, Amb. Askar Mussinov, Assistant Secretary-General for Science and Technology, briefed the meeting on the background, development, and foundations of the OIC-15 Dialogue Platform. He indicated that the First Ministerial Meeting of the Platform was welcomed in a resolution issued by the 49th session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers, held in 2023 in Nouakchott, Mauritania. He reiterated the commitment of the OIC General Secretariat to undertake all actions to strengthen the OIC-15 Dialogue Platform.

The Ministerial Meeting discussed and adopted a number of fundamental documents, designed to launch the OIC-15 Dialogue Platform as an informal and consultative international forum to enhance intra-OIC collaboration in the field of science and technology. The said documents were all incorporated into the Outcome Document, adopted by the Ministerial Meeting

under the title: "Almaty Rules and Regulations of the OIC-15 Dialogue Platform".

As part of the discussions and statements delivered by heads of delegations, the representative of Iran offered to host the Second Ministerial Meeting of the OIC-15 Dialogue Platform in Tehran in 2024.

With regard to the continuous cooperation between Al-Farabi Kazakh National University and the OIC, the Rector, Mr. Zhanseit Tuimebayev, announced the readiness of the University to establish, at its premises, an OIC Office on Science and Technology.

## OIC and Digital Cooperation Organization Sign MoU

The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, and the Secretary-General of the Digital Cooperation Organization (DCO), H.E. Ms. Deemah Al Yahya, signed, on May 10, 2023 at the OIC headquarters, a Memorandum of Understanding between the OIC and the DCO. The MoU provides a framework of cooperation between the two organizations for the development of an inclusive and sustainable digital economy, by unifying their efforts to advance digital transformation in Member States.

Both sides agreed to cooperate in the digitalization of human resources, to bridge the digital and ICT skills gaps, and to harmonize, in consultation with the two Organizations' Member States, government regulatory frameworks and other relevant laws to facilitate interoperability of digital data and IDs across the countries.



## Saudi Minister of Hajj and Umrah Briefs OIC Member States on Services for Pilgrims

The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received, on June 13, 2023 at the headquarters of the General Secretariat, H.E. Dr. Tawfig bin Fawzan Al-Rabiah, Saudi Minister of Hajj and Umrah.

In his welcome remarks, the Secretary-General expressed gratitude to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz, to HRH Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman, to the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah, and to all the Saudi State institutions, for their commendable efforts to facilitate procedures for pilgrims, Umrah performers, and visitors of the Two Holy Mosques, so that they can perform their rituals in best conditions.

“Saudi Arabia,” he said, “is honored to be entrusted with the responsibility of being the guardian of the Two Holy Mosques and serving pilgrims, Umrah performers, and visitors of the Prophet’s Mosque. It has spared no effort to smooth out all obstacles and mobilize all its resources, skills, and workforce to ensure the success of the Hajj season every year, and thus provide a unique spiritual journey during which pilgrims and Umrah performers can perform their rituals in best conditions in terms of health and safety.”

During his visit to the General Secretariat, the Minister of Hajj and Umrah met, in the presence of the OIC Secretary-General, with Delegates, Permanent Representatives, and

Consuls-General from Member States and OIC subsidiary organs. He highlighted Saudi Arabia’s efforts and arrangements for this year’s Hajj season (1444 AH), including initiatives and procedures to ensure the best possible conditions for pilgrims to perform their rituals with ease and reassurance.

The Saudi Minister stressed in his statement that “the OIC holds a special place as the collective voice of the Muslim World, advocating for issues affecting over 1.5 billion Muslims worldwide. Meanwhile, the Kingdom has served the Two Holy Mosques since its founding. This has become a deeply-entrenched value receiving direct attention from the Saudi Government which has earned praise from countries worldwide for its longstanding commitment to serving pilgrims.”

The Minister highlighted the successful collaboration of various agencies in the Hajj and Umrah ecosystem, resulting in significant achievements in terms of health, organization, services, logistics, and security. The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques inaugurated the Pilgrims Experience Program, a crucial component of the Saudi Vision 2030, designed to enhance the quality and efficiency of services and enrich the pilgrims’ experience. The Grand Mosque in Makkah was expanded to be the largest building in history, with a cost of over SAR 200 billion, and the construction of the Two

Holy Mosques train, with a cost estimated at SAR 60 billion, has significantly improved the travel and transport experience of the pilgrims and shortened the distance between Makkah and Al-Madinah to about two hours. In addition, the development of King Abdulaziz International Airport in Jeddah, with a cost of over SAR 64 billion, and the preservation of historical mosques and Islamic archaeological sites, are additional achievements designed to offer a rich religious experience for all pilgrims.

It is worth mentioning that Saudi Arabia has introduced several initiatives to make it easier for Muslims to travel to the Kingdom. These include issuing visas in less than 24 hours, extending the Umrah visa from 30 to 90 days, introducing a four-day transit visa, and allowing visa holders to freely perform Umrah and explore the country’s unique cultural diversity. Additionally, the “Nusuk” platform was launched, offering over 120 services in nine languages to facilitate procedures for visiting Makkah and Al-Madinah and enrich the spiritual experience of pilgrims, Umrah performers and all visitors. All these initiatives are part of the Saudi Vision 2030.

During this event, Amb. Dya-Eddine Bamaqhrama, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Djibouti to the OIC, delivered a statement on behalf of the Permanent Representatives.

## Secretary-General Congratulates Muslim Ummah on Eid Al-Adha and Commends Saudi Success in Organizing the Hajj Ritual



On the advent of the blessed Eid Al-Adha 1444 AH, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, addressed his profound and heartfelt congratulations to the entire Muslim Ummah. He congratulated, on this occasion cherished by all Muslims, Their Majesties, Excellencies, and Highnesses the Kings, Princes, and Presidents of the OIC Member States.

The Secretary-General shared the Eid celebrations with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the OIC host country and the current Chair of the Islamic Summit, and conveyed his warm congratulations to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz, to HRH Prince Muhammad bin Salman, as well as to the Government and people of Saudi Arabia. He expressed hope that the Eid would bring joy, goodness and affection to all Muslim countries, and foster love and cooperation among all OIC Member States. He wished for peace and happiness to prevail on this festive occasion.

The Secretary-General regretted that Eid Al-Adha coincides with numerous challenges being faced by several Member States, including the continued Israeli violations against the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Israeli attempts to undermine its status and claim it as its own. He reiterated, on this occasion, the OIC's unwavering position in support of the Islamic identity of Al-Aqsa Mosque and other Islamic sanctities in Al-Quds Ash-Sharif.

The Secretary-General also regretted that the Muslims' Eid during the Hajj season coincides with the ongoing crisis in Sudan, causing Sudan and Sudanese families, including men, women, and children, to endure daily hardships. He hoped that the suffering of Sudan would soon come to an end, and that the Sudanese people's aspirations would be fulfilled.

The Secretary-General also highlighted the problem of refugees and the suffering endured in refugee camps across various Islamic

countries, such as the African Sahel, Lake Chad, Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar, and other affected regions. This is in addition to the problems of poverty, epidemics and diseases, as well as wars and attacks by extremist groups, which result in significant human and material losses.

The OIC Secretary-General prayed to Allah that this occasion would mark the start of relief, that the Muslim Ummah would unite in goodness and blessings, and that peace, stability, and prosperity would prevail all over the Muslim world.

The Secretary-General extended his congratulations to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, under the leadership of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, on the success of the 1444 AH Hajj season. He commended all the facilities and services provided for visitors of the holy sites from OIC Member States and other countries with Muslim communities.

## Secretary-General Stresses the Importance of the Conference on Communication with Departments of Religious Affairs in the World

The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, took part in the First Conference on "Communication with the Departments of Religious Affairs, Ifta, and Sheikhdoms in the World", held under the title: "Communication and Integration." The conference was held under the auspices of the Saudi Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Dawah, and Guidance, in Makkah Al-Mukarramah on August 13, 2023.

The Conference was inaugurated by H.E. Dr. Abdullatif bin Abdulaziz Al-Sheikh, Saudi Minister of Islamic Affairs, Dawah, and Guidance.

In his statement to the Conference, the Secretary-General expressed his pleasure to attend a distinguished intellectual and scientific event dealing with a subject that lies at the heart of the main mandate of the OIC. He noted that Saudi Arabia's hosting of this significant conference confirms its position as a key actor in supporting the positive trends of the Muslim Ummah and working for its renaissance, especially that the Kingdom has succeeded in becoming a haven of tolerance and peaceful coexistence, turning this human value into a tangible approach, and undertaking a leading role in promoting interreligious dialogue.

The Secretary-General seized this occasion to extend his sincere thanks to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, and to HRH Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, for the tremendous support they provide in various fields that contribute to the success of the OIC's mission in the service of Islam and Muslims.

The Secretary-General noted that the Conference is being held at a time when various challenges are facing the Islamic Ummah, including attempts to distort the image of Islam, which requires standing in the face of these hostile currents and restoring the concept of Islamic unity. The relationship between the components of the Islamic Ummah, he added, should be based on the principle of One Ummah worshipping Allah and following a Shari'a that unites us and brings us closer to one another, and does not divide us.

The Secretary-General pointed out that the



newly established Department of Dialogue and Outreach within the OIC General Secretariat contributes to promoting dialogue, awareness, and openness to all other cultures and civilizations. He commended, in this regard, the various organs operating under the OIC's umbrella, foremost among which is ICESCO, which seeks to consolidate the culture of peace and dialogue and uphold the values of mutual understanding and mutual respect.

The Secretary-General added that "the relationship between the components of the Islamic Ummah should be based on the principle of One Ummah worshipping Allah and following a Shari'a that unites us and brings us closer to one another and does not divide us. It also rests on our partnership to contribute to enriching Islamic civilization and its human dimensions, while working to achieve balance between preserving the vital interests of the Islamic Ummah and its deep-rooted values, on the one hand, and thinking toward pursuing the reform approach in the entire Islamic system in thought and culture, on the other hand."

The Secretary-General stressed that the Islamic world, including States, peoples, governmental and private organizations and institutions, is called on today, more than ever before, to work together in order to

formulate a comprehensive Islamic code that provides the rules and principles of convergence and disagreement that govern relations among the various components of the Muslim Ummah. He indicated, in this regard, that the OIC believes that consolidating the principle of dialogue among Muslims, promoting sectarian peace, spreading a culture of fraternity and solidarity, and insisting on achieving Islamic unity, rank high among its key priorities; the aim being to unify voices and positions, and to uphold the principles of our sublime religion which calls for cooperation, solidarity, mutual support, tolerance, and acceptance of difference in order to serve the common goals of our Ummah. Our shared destiny, he added, requires us to confront the dangers besetting our Ummah with closed ranks, clear goals, and full awareness of the challenges of the common destiny.

The Secretary-General indicated that regional, Islamic and international organizations and the ministries of Awqaf and Islamic affairs have a major and leading role to play in publicizing Islam and Islamic thought, correcting erroneous concepts about Islam, highlighting the intellectual contributions of Islam and its impact on human civilization, as well as deepening dialogue and consolidating cooperation among Islamic Madhab (schools of thought).

## Secretary-General: Saudi Chairmanship of Islamic and Arab Summits Gives New impetus to Arab-Islamic Cooperation



The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, attended the opening of the 32nd session of the Summit Conference of the Arab League Council, which kicked off on May 19, 2023, in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Addressing the meeting, the Secretary-General offered his sincere congratulations to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, to Crown Prince HRH Prince Mohammad bin Salman, and to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, for chairing the current session of the Council of the League of Arab States. He stressed that Saudi Arabia's concurrent chairmanship of the Arab and Islamic Summits will certainly give new impetus to cooperation between the OIC and the Arab League, through coordinated efforts to address common issues and contribute to finding appropriate solutions to challenges within a multilateral framework. The Secretary-General also commended the efforts exerted by Algeria to promote joint Arab action during its chair of the previous session.

The Secretary-General noted that the Arab Summit is taking place amid delicate circumstances and challenges facing the Arab and Muslim worlds, a fact that requires strengthening cooperation and solidarity and intensifying efforts and coordination, especially

with regard to the Palestinian question, the central Cause for the Arab and Muslim worlds. He recalled, in this regard, the continuing political stalemate and the escalating brutal Israeli attacks on the Palestinian people, and on their land and holy sites, especially the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque.

The Secretary-General also expressed deep concern over the crisis in Sudan, recalling the OIC's call for an urgent and permanent cease-fire and for resort to dialogue to resolve differences. He reaffirmed the OIC's welcoming of the joint Saudi-US initiative to start preliminary talks in Jeddah between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces. He urged the Sudanese parties to give priority to the national interest of Sudan in order to preserve its unity and achieve the aspirations of its people.

On the other hand, the Secretary-General stressed the OIC's keenness to support all efforts to remove the causes of tension, overcome the obstacles of the past, and achieve peace, security and stability in Yemen, Libya and Syria, in addition to strengthening solidarity with Somalia so that it can overcome difficulties.

The Secretary-General looked forward to strengthening solidarity with the countries of the Sahel region and the Lake Chad basin,

which share close historical and geographical ties with the Arab world.

The Secretary-General highlighted the need to intensify coordination between the OIC and the League of Arab States in various fields, including empowering women and youth, combating terrorism and extremism, and countering hate speech and Islamophobia.

Following the success of the Arab Summit, which concluded on May 19, 2023 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, extended his sincere congratulations to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, to Crown Prince HRH Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, and to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The Secretary-General commended the leading role played by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to ensure the success of the Arab Summit, which would strengthen the bonds of solidarity and cooperation in the region and give a new impetus to the efforts exerted in order to find appropriate solutions to all issues and challenges facing it. He expressed his confidence that Saudi Arabia's chair of the Arab Summit and the 14th Islamic Summit would help strengthen cooperation and coordinate positions between the two groups.

## OIC Secretary-General Attends Inauguration of Erdoğan as President of Türkiye

The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, attended, on June 3, 2023, in Ankara, the inauguration ceremony of H.E. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, President of Türkiye, who was elected by the Turkish people for a new term. He took this opportunity to reiterate his congratulations and best wishes to President Erdogan for success in his new term, and to the people of Türkiye for further progress and prosperity. He noted that President Erdogan's re-election reflects the high confidence placed in him by the Turkish people. The Secretary-General also congratulated the Turkish people on the success of the elections that concluded on May 28, 2023.

## OIC Attends Inauguration of the President-elect of Nigeria

At the invitation of H.E. Mr. Muhammadu Buhari, the outgoing President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, to participate in the inauguration ceremony of the new democratically-elected President, H.E. Mr. Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, dispatched a high-level delegation led by H.E. Amb Yousef M. Al-Dobeay, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, to represent him at this important event. Amb. Al-Dobeay conveyed to the President-elect the Secretary-General's congratulations and best wishes of success in his mandate to meet the aspirations of the Nigerian people, as well as his wishes of further progress and prosperity to Nigeria.

## OIC Mission Participates in Election Observation in Cambodia

On the sidelines of its participation in the observation of the general elections in Cambodia, the OIC Mission, led by H.E. Amb Yousef Al-Dobeay, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, met, on July 20, 2023 in the capital city of Phnom Penh, with H.E. Dr. Othman Hassan, Minister of State in charge of Special Missions - Islamic Affairs - in the Kingdom of Cambodia, and Special Envoy of the Kingdom of Cambodia to the OIC.

The meeting addressed regional developments and issues of shared interest, and explored ways to enhance relations between the OIC and Cambodia. Discussions focused, in particular, on the situation of Mus-



lim minorities in Cambodia. In this regard, Amb Al-Dobeay commended the state of harmonious coexistence among religions within the Cambodian society. He hailed the

successful integration of Muslims into Cambodian society, and the positive example of social harmony that Cambodia provides to other countries in the region.

## OIC Participates in the Observation of Presidential Elections in Uzbekistan



Following an invitation from the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the OIC participated in the observation of the Presidential Elections held on July 9, 2023. The OIC Mission was led by Amb. Boubakar Adamou, Director for African Affairs at the OIC Political Department. The OIC observation of the Presidential elections in Uzbekistan

was part of the Organization's continuous endeavor to promote democracy and good governance in Member States in accordance with its Charter, the Code of Conduct for OIC Election Observers, and the 2005 Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation.

The OIC observers noted that the voting

process was well-organized, and that the people of Uzbekistan exercised their voting rights in a peaceful manner.

During a press briefing by international observers, the Head of the OIC Mission expressed the Mission's satisfaction at the peaceful conduct of the elections. He conveyed the Secretary-General's congratulations to the people of Uzbekistan, as well as to the outgoing president H.E. Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoyev who was re-elected with 87.05% of the votes, for their commitment to the democratic process and values, and to the socioeconomic development of the country. He also underscored the OIC's commitment to supporting Uzbekistan, an important and active Member State of the OIC, in the process of consolidating democracy, good governance, socioeconomic development, and promotion of human rights.

## Secretary-General Calls for Developing the Humanitarian Action Ecosystem in the Muslim World



The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, underlined the importance of developing plans to enhance the humanitarian action ecosystem in the Islamic world. He indicated that a more ambitious vision is necessary to address the challenges faced in this regard, given the frequent disasters that require immediate relief efforts to save lives. This will enable Muslims to perform the duty of providing aid and assistance to their brothers in need, and accordingly strengthen the sense of solidarity and mutual support among the peoples of the Ummah.

This was part of the Secretary-General's statement at the opening of the fifth consultative meeting between the Islamic Committee of the International Crescent (ICIC) and the National Societies of the Red Crescent and Red Cross in the OIC Member States, hosted by the Saudi Red Crescent Authority in Jeddah on July 22-26, 2023, under the auspices of HRH Prince Khaled Al-Faisal, Advisor to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, Governor of Makkah Al-Mukarramah Region.

The Secretary-General commended the efforts exerted by the ICIC and the National Societies of the Red Crescent and the Red Cross in the OIC Member States. He highlighted the immense pressure they face in times of disasters and humanitarian crises, which at times surpasses their capabilities. He took this opportunity to thank H.E. Dr. Jalal bin Muhammad Al-Owaisi, President of

the Saudi Red Crescent, and his outstanding team, for organizing this session and for their commendable humanitarian work in the Member States.

The Secretary-General indicated that the OIC General Secretariat stands ready to collaborate with the ICIC and the National Societies of the Red Crescent and Red Cross in the Member States, in order to support their sincere endeavors to provide aid to those in need and those affected by natural or man-made disasters in Member States.

On the other hand, the OIC General Secretariat participated in the 47th session of the General Assembly of the Arab Red Crescent and Red Cross Organization, hosted by the Qatar Red Crescent in Doha, on June 5-6, 2023. The meeting was held under the auspices of H.E. Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdul Rahman bin Jassim Al Thani, Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar.

The session was opened by H.E. Mrs. Lulwa Bint Rashid Al-Khater, Minister of International Cooperation of the State of Qatar. It was also addressed by H.E. Mr. Saleh Al-Tuwaijri, Secretary-General of the Arab Red Crescent and Red Cross Organization, H.E. Mr. Yousef bin Ali Al-Khater, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Qatar Red Crescent, Chairman of the current session, and H.E. Mr. Jalal bin Muhammad Al Owaisi, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Saudi Red Crescent, Chairman of the previ-

ous session.

The OIC General Secretariat was represented in this meeting by Mr. Ayman Abboushi, from the Information Department, who also participated in the celebration of the International Humanitarian Law Day held on June 7, 2023, on the sidelines of the session's meetings, under the theme: "International Humanitarian Law: Between Reality and Expectations". This event touched on key issues related to the work of journalists on the ground as well as in war and conflict zones.

On July 24, 2023, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, met in his office at the headquarters of the General Secretariat, with Dr. Saleh Al-Tuwaijri, Secretary-General of the Arab Organization for the Red Crescent and the Red Cross (ARCO).

The Secretary-General listened to a detailed presentation from Dr. Al-Tuwaijri about the various humanitarian activities undertaken by ARCO. He praised the efforts made by ARCO in the service of humanitarian action, and stressed the importance of redoubling these efforts in order to meet the current humanitarian challenges in the Islamic world.

Both sides discussed bilateral cooperation between the OIC General Secretariat and ARCO, and stressed the need for more coordination in humanitarian action, exchange of documents, and capacity-building.

## 273 Persons Died in Disasters in Member States in 3 months



During the period June through August 2023, seven OIC countries (Afghanistan, Pakistan, Algeria, Guyana, Nigeria, Morocco, and Kazakhstan) witnessed disasters (floods, fires ...) and human accidents. The most severe of these incidents was the Nigeria riverboat disaster whose death toll rose to 106 people.

In Mahdia, Guyana, a school dormitory fire claimed the lives of 19 students and injured many others. The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Houssein Brahim Taha, expressed his deep condolences to the Government and people of Guyana, as well as to the families of the victims, wishing a speedy recovery for the injured.

Early this summer, Algeria witnessed several accidents and disasters, the most severe of which was the outbreak, on June 24, of forest fires in several parts of the country, killing 15 people. The Secretary-General expressed his sincere condolences to the families of the civilians and soldiers killed by the wildfires. He expressed solidarity with those evacuated from the affected areas and wished quick recovery for the injured. He

also commended the Algerian Government for the actions it took to contain the spreading of fires and curb their damaging effects. The Secretary-General also conveyed his sincere condolences and sympathies to the Government and people of Algeria following the terrible traffic accident in which a passenger bus collided with a small truck in the Tamanrasset province of southern Algeria, claiming 34 lives.

The Secretary-General extended his deep condolences to the Government and people of Nigeria after 106 people lost their lives, with many missing, when a boat sank on the Niger River in North-Central Nigeria on June 13, 2023. He expressed his sympathy to the families of the victims and prayed to Allah to grant them mercy, admit them to paradise, and grant their families patience and fortitude.

The Secretary-General expressed his sincere condolences to the leadership, government and people of Morocco after a horrific traffic accident took place in Azilal region, causing 24 deaths. He offered his condolences to the families of the victims, praying Allah

to grant them patience and solace in their time of grief. He also wished a speedy recovery for the injured.

The Secretary-General conveyed his heartfelt condolences to the Government and people of Kazakhstan in the wake of the devastating forest fires that ravaged the Abay region in the eastern part of the country, claiming the lives of 14 forest workers and leaving several others injured.

The Secretary-General extended his sincere condolences and sympathies to the families of the victims of floods in Afghanistan on July 23, 2023, which caused 31 deaths and left many missing. He called on the OIC Member States, institutions and partners to support the response and recovery efforts deployed by Afghanistan to mitigate the impacts of this disaster.

The Secretary-General expressed his profound sympathy to the Government and people of Pakistan following the Karachi-Rawalpindi passenger train accident on 6 August 2023, in which 30 passengers lost their lives and 100 others were gravely injured.

## OIC Delegation Visits Sudanese Refugee Areas in Chad



As part of its working visit to take stock of the humanitarian needs of Sudanese refugees who flocked to Chad, the OIC General Secretariat Delegation met with Mr. Ismail Gnamouta Djobo, Governor of Sila, a Chadian region bordering Sudan and hosting the biggest number of refugees since the outbreak of the crisis in Sudan.

The Governor affirmed the continuous influxes of refugees arriving daily in Chad, and called for greater support to help the Government of Chad meet the increasing needs of refugees.

The OIC Delegation also met with Mr. Ali Abdoulaye Idriss, Regional Delegate of the National Commission for the Hosting and Reintegration of Refugees and the Repatriated, who briefed the delegation on the Commission's coordination role with donors and humanitarian partners, and provided information on the number of refugees and the situation in refugee camps.

On the other hand, the Delegation listened to a briefing given by the Country Representa-

tative of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) who provided statistics regarding the number of refugees, briefed partners on the state of provision of humanitarian assistance and the outstanding needs, and shared information on the building of camps to host thousands of refugees who would be relocated from the temporary camps.

In addition to the OIC Delegation, the briefing was attended by representatives from humanitarian agencies operating in Chad, including the World Food Programme (WFP), Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), the French Red Cross, and several international and national NGOs, who made presentations about their contributions to the partners' efforts to support the Sudanese refugees in Chad.

Beside the meetings, the OIC Delegation visited the area of "Zaboud" where a new camp is being constructed to host 7,000 families, equivalent to 35,000 refugees expected to be relocated from "Ade village",

and "Ademour", a temporary camp hosting thousands of refugees fleeing the crisis in Sudan. The Delegation also visited "Ademour" where they talked to groups of refugees and took stock first-hand of their living conditions.

On June 22, 2023, Amb. Tarig Ali Bakheet, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian, Social and Cultural Affairs, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, had a virtual meeting with Mr. Osman Al-Bilbeisi, International Organization for Migration (IOM) Regional Director for MENA, and Ms. Maria Moita, IOM Chief of Mission in Afghanistan.

Both sides exchanged views on ways to enhance the ongoing humanitarian efforts to support Afghanistan. They also discussed the OIC-IOM response to the humanitarian crisis in Sudan and the Sahel region. The meeting reviewed bilateral OIC-IOM cooperation in line with the MoU signed between the two parties in 2003.

## OIC Commemorates “World Refugee Day” and “International Humanitarian Law Day”

The OIC General Secretariat issued a press statement to commemorate “World Refugee Day”, annually observed on June 20, pursuant to the UNGA Resolution adopted in December 2000.

The Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, expressed, on this occasion, his support and solidarity with refugees, and stressed the high priority accorded to this vulnerable group on the OIC humanitarian agenda. He recalled the exceptional circumstances of refugees who have been forced to leave their homelands due to the difficult humanitarian conditions resulting from wars, conflicts and natural disasters.

The Secretary-General commended the OIC Member States’ generous efforts in hosting refugees, and their continued fulfillment of their commitment towards them by providing them with the needed assistance and protection, being a humanitarian and Islamic duty dictated by the teachings of Islam, the OIC Charter, and the relevant national and international laws.

The Secretary-General urged the international community to provide the needed support to refugee-hosting Member States, in line with the principles of equitable partnership. He drew attention to the fact that OIC Member States currently bear the largest share of the global refugee burden, hosting over

half of the world’s refugees. Among these Member States, he added, some might be a source of refugees, a transit point, or a place of settlement for refugees.

The Secretary-General asserted that providing assistance to this vulnerable group requires more efforts to address the root causes of the refugee crisis in the Islamic world in all its political, social and humanitarian dimensions. He highlighted, in this regard, the tireless efforts of the General Secretariat, along with international partners and organizations, especially the UNHCR, to find long-term solutions to the refugee problem, and to promote the voluntary, safe, and dignified return of refugees in accordance with the relevant internationally recognized instruments and agreements.

The Secretary-General highly valued the pivotal role undertaken by UNRWA in alleviating the suffering of the Palestinian refugees. He called on the international community, the UN, and the OIC Member States to continue supporting UNRWA so that it can continue providing its services to the Palestinian refugees until their right to return is achieved based on the resolutions of international legitimacy.

In view of the increase of armed conflicts, with their humanitarian dimensions and repercussions, and in commemoration of the

“International Humanitarian Law Day”, annually observed on May 9th, the OIC called for raising the level of global awareness on the need to abide by the principles and rules of international humanitarian law aimed at providing protection for innocent people and victims of conflicts and wars, in line with the noble Islamic principles and the OIC Charter. By dedicating May 9th of each year as International Humanitarian Law Day, under its Resolution No. 1/42 issued by the 42nd Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers held in Kuwait in 2015, the OIC affirmed its deep commitment to promoting the principles and rules of international humanitarian law.

The OIC General Secretariat took this opportunity to appeal to Member States to take advantage of this occasion to carry out activities that contribute to strengthening the rules of international humanitarian law and ensuring their effective enforcement on the ground, in order to protect civilians, especially children, women, the disabled, refugees and displaced persons. It also called on all societies to consolidate the values of peaceful coexistence, tolerance and acceptance of the other, and to take concrete measures to promote and enforce international humanitarian law, many of whose principles are at the heart of the noble values of Islam.



## Indonesia and OIC Hold Cultural Week



The Indonesian Minister of Youth and Sports, H.E. Mr. Dito Ariatedjo, and the Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian, Cultural, and Social Affairs, H.E. Amb. Tarig Ali Bakheet, inaugurated, on July 8, 2023 during an official opening ceremony, the “OIC-Indonesia Cultural Week” which extended over the period July 7-14, 2023.

In his statement on this occasion, the Indonesian Minister noted that Indonesia’s cultural diversity and rich civilization will be reflected in the artistic performances and in the cultural programs, activities and events planned throughout the Cultural Week. He indicated that the holding of this event in Indonesia is meant to give participants from the OIC family the opportunity to take stock of the smooth and steady development of Indonesia and to experience the multiple

facets of its rich and distinctive culture.

For his part, Amb. Bakheet thanked the Indonesian leadership, Government and people for the excellent organization of the Cultural Week and for the warm hospitality extended to all participating delegations. He noted that after the successful holding, last year, of the OIC Cultural Days in Uganda, the OIC-Indonesia Cultural Week, this year, seeks to highlight the importance of culture and cultural diplomacy as a means of rapprochement among Muslim societies, with this event providing opportunities to foster the bonds of friendship, mutual respect and solidarity among OIC Member States and institutions.

The OIC-Indonesia Cultural Week, held under the theme of “Embracing diversity and advancing harmony for a brighter society in

the future”, involved the organization of various academic panels on issues pertaining to dialogue among religions, cultural challenges in the age of globalization, and youth, innovation and technology. It also featured artistic performances, sessions for cultural expressions, and other activities.

On this same occasion, H.E. Mr. Dito Ariatedjo, Minister of Youth and Sports of Indonesia, received, on July 7, 2023 in his office in Jakarta, H.E. Amb. Tarig Ali Bakheet and his accompanying delegation.

The Minister welcomed the OIC delegation, and expressed the commitment of his Ministry and other Indonesian relevant stakeholders to cooperate with the OIC in promoting cooperation in vital issues, including inter-cultural dialogue, youth empowerment, entrepreneurship, education, and parallel diplomacy. He also thanked the OIC for choosing Indonesia to host this important Cultural Week in order to celebrate common Islamic values, and offer Member States and institutions a space to connect with each other and explore multiple avenues for positive action and mutually beneficial partnerships.

For his part, Amb. Bakheet reiterated the OIC’s gratitude to the Government and people of Indonesia for the warm hospitality extended to all the delegations participating in this joint cultural event. He commended Indonesia, the largest Muslim country, for its unwavering commitment and continuous mobilization toward achieving the OIC goals and objectives.

## OIC Discusses Project of Establishing a Platform for Cultural Heritage Protection in OIC Countries

The OIC General Secretariat held, on May 16, 2023, at its headquarters in Jeddah, an Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Group Meeting on establishing an OIC Platform for the protection and preservation of cultural heritage in the Islamic world. The OIC has supported international efforts and initiatives aimed at protecting cultural and natural heritage in emergency situations. It continues to contribute to global efforts in this regard, and to enhance action on this pressing issue.

This was part of the statement of the OIC

Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, delivered on his behalf by Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian, Cultural and Social Affairs, Amb. Tarig Ali Bakheet, at the opening of the meeting.

Amb. Bakheet noted that cultural heritage is an essential landmark reflecting the broad geographical space of the OIC as well as a key factor for preserving the collective memory of the Islamic Ummah and its peoples. He indicated that the two-day meeting would discuss the different aspects of this promising project, and would certainly

involve fruitful discussions on the OIC’s future role in protecting and enhancing the value of cultural heritage in Member States.

The Expert Meeting was held as part of implementing the resolutions of the OIC CFM meetings, particularly Resolution No. 10/49-C on the Protection and Preservation of Islamic and World Historical and Cultural Heritage, adopted by the 49th session of the Council of Foreign Ministers, held in Nouakchott, Mauritania, in March 2023.

## The Role of Egyptian Puppet Theater in Creating the Special Effects of Spectacle in the Arab World and Africa

Cairo – Hajjaj Salama (DPA)

A recent Algerian study states that the history of Puppet Theater in Egypt is an artistic system for spectacle and the aesthetic composition of the puppet show. This history forms an extension of a Pharaonic comic and tragic heritage, filled with images and drawings etched in the memory of peoples. Its existence was also associated with the Fatimid and Mamluk eras. The study reviews the influence of the Egyptian puppet theater in creating the special effects of spectacle in the Arab world and the African continent.

In her study entitled : "The Impact of Egyptian Puppet Theater in the Creation of the Special Effects of Spectacle in the Arab World and Africa," published as part of the Scientific Publication Program for Scientific Conferences at the Academy of Arts in Cairo, Algerian researcher and academic, Dr. Zineb Lout explains that Egyptian puppet theater has gone by many different names, including "Al-Karakeez Theater", "Al-Aragouz", and "Qarqoush". These names evoke a sense of entertainment and great interaction through which the ancient Egyptian folklore was formed.

The study indicates that puppetry is deeply rooted in Egyptian history, which extends back to the Pharaonic times, through the images of "Osiris figurines", and that there have been puppets for as long as there have been human beings.

The study also states that in 1957, Egypt decided to revive this deep-rooted artistic heritage by establishing the Egyptian Puppet Theater, the supervision of which was entrusted with the artist Ahmed Amer, a pioneer of that art in the country. A Folk Theater Troupe was created to revive the art of puppetry. The revival of this art was linked with educational, artistic and heritage goals. The multiplicity of goals was extremely important for its spread and development through exposure to Western and Arab experiences.

According to the study, Czechoslovakia produced ten rubber and marionette dolls to support the Egyptian Puppet Theater, whose administration sought to invite Japan, China and Russia to exchange experiences and knowledge with regard to this art. The ar-

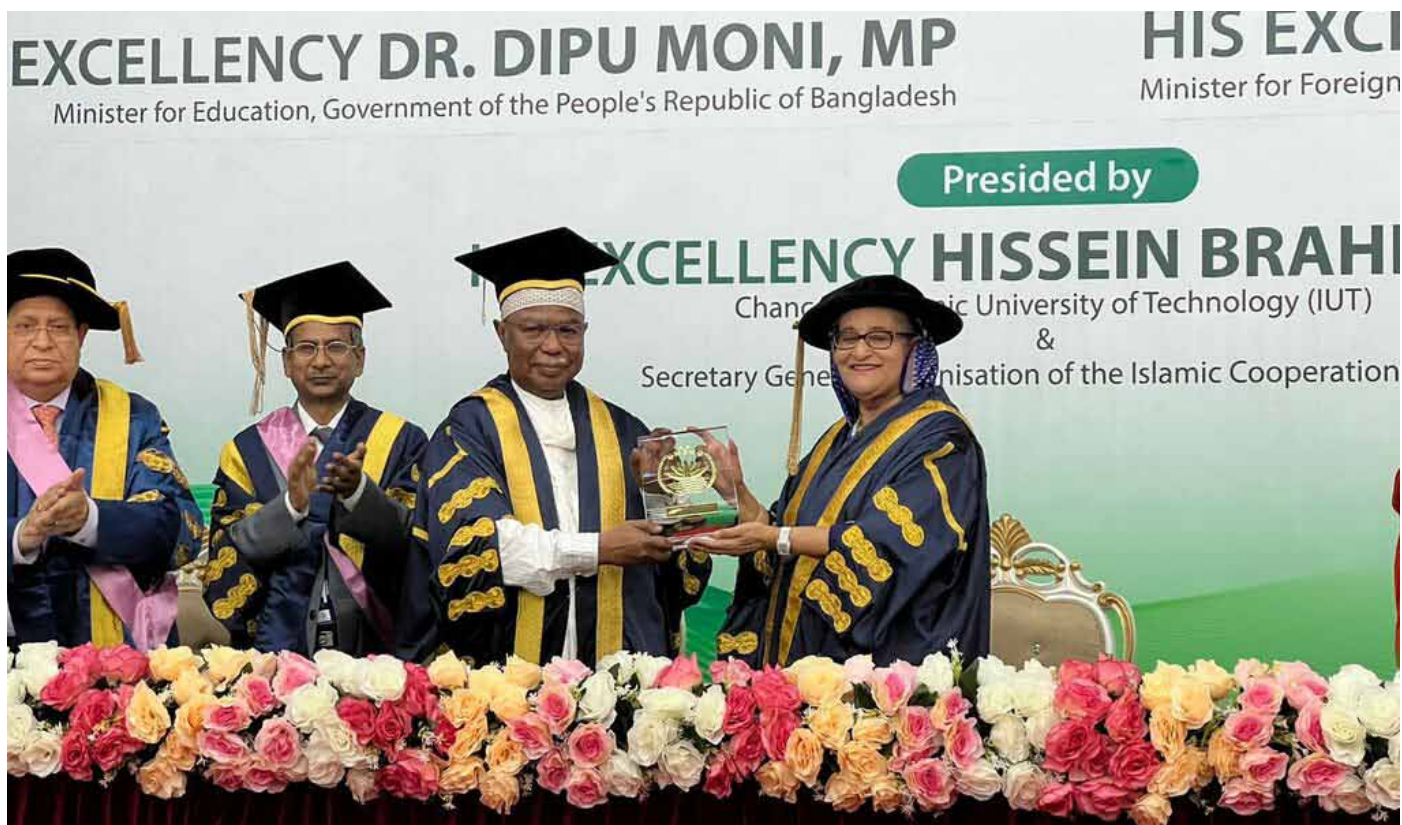


rival of the Romanian puppet theater in Cairo in 1957 contributed to developing the Egyptian experience and influencing its performance aesthetics and diversifying its themes.

The study points out that Egyptian puppet theater has developed through interaction with Western experiences to enhance performance techniques and achieve its goals and objectives. It adds that public shows are very active in Egypt, and "Al-Aragouz" has achieved widespread popularity among the audiences who are entertained by the performance and the topics touch their lives and environment in simple and influential ways.

The study addresses the artistic composition of puppet theater in Egypt, and its impact on the components of puppet theater around the world. It explains how the promotion of this art requires the use of modern technologies necessary for its development and for presenting shows concerned with the folkloric aspects on the one hand, and with the social, entertainment, instructive and educational aspects on the other.

The study shows that puppet theater has set itself apart thanks to its long experience and its rigor in selecting topics, while taking into account age differences. It has also paid attention to the educational aspect in many theater schools around the world, in addition to combining ideas and references from folk literature with its own aesthetic use in performances. The reason for this is that puppet theater is the closest medium to people's understanding and is also the most entertaining, having the power to pass on messages and consolidate values in much the same way as artistically important media. The knowledge that Egyptians have gained as a result of their openness to international experiences in this field has made it possible for Egyptian puppetry to go global. The study points out that the Egyptian puppet theater has benefited from popular customs and traditions, which are compatible with theatrical creativity that appeals to peoples' mindsets and intellectual background.



## Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sponsors IUT Convocation Ceremony

The Islamic University of Technology (IUT) hosted, on May 30, 2023, its 35th Convocation Ceremony at the IUT Campus in Dhaka. The Ceremony took place with the distinguished presence of H.E. Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, as Chief Guest. It was chaired by H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, OIC Secretary-General and Chancellor of the IUT.

In his opening remarks, the OIC Secretary-General expressed gratitude for the continuous support of Bangladesh towards the IUT. He commended the University's outstanding efforts to nurture intellectual growth, especially in the field of technology. He highlighted the crucial role of education in empowering individuals and societies, and encouraged the graduating students to leverage their knowledge and skills to make positive impact in their communities, in the Islamic world, and in the world at large. He expressed immense pride in the graduates' accomplishments, commending their exceptional academic performance and the great potential they hold in their fields of specialization.

The Chief Guest, the Honorable Prime Minister of Bangladesh, delivered a statement in which she highlighted the central role of education in fostering economic growth, social progress, and national development. She paid tribute to the graduates for their relentless pursuit of knowledge, and encouraged them to harness their expertise to address the challenges faced by their countries and contribute to making a positive impact in society and promoting technological advancement, while remaining committed to the values of Islam. The Prime Minister recalled that the Government of Bangladesh donated 2 million USD as a contribution to the construction of halls of residence for female students of the IUT.

During this ceremony, 550 graduates received their certificates and diplomas, including students from 14 OIC Member States. The Ceremony was attended by H.E. Minister of Foreign affairs of Bangladesh and H.E. Minister of Education of Bangladesh, along with a number of Ambassadors of OIC Member States and members of the Governing Board.

On May 28, 2023, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, H.E. Sheikh Hasina, received the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, in Dhaka.

The meeting addressed cooperation between Bangladesh and the OIC, and ways to strengthen joint Islamic action and enhance the spirit of solidarity.

The Secretary-General paid tribute to Bangladesh for its efforts in support of the OIC's projects and programs. He also commended the Government and people of Bangladesh for their relentless efforts to provide shelters and the needed protection and assistance to Rohingya refugees who have been living in Bangladesh for the past five years.

The Secretary-General, as the Chancellor of the Dhaka-based Islamic University of Technology (IUT), thanked the Prime Minister for her support to the University, which organized its 35th Convocation Ceremony on May 30, 2023.

For her part, the Prime Minister thanked the Secretary-General for visiting Bangladesh and expressed her country's constant readiness to support the OIC's efforts.

## President of Pakistan Receives Participants in Meeting of COMSTech Scientific Advisory Council

The President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, H.E. Dr. Arif Alvi, who is also the Chairman of the OIC Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTech), received the participants in the Second Meeting of COMSTech Scientific Advisory Council, held on June 12, 2023 in Islamabad, Pakistan. The President stressed the urgent need for closer interaction among the OIC Member States in this era marked by rapid and unprecedented transformations in the fields of science, education and technology.

In his remarks to the Council meeting, H.E. Amb. Askar Mussinov, Assistant Secretary-

General for Science and Technology, underscored the importance of COMSTech, as an OIC institution, in supporting the Member States' efforts to develop the field of science and technology. He underlined the need for concerted efforts among the scientifically most advanced OIC countries for the creation of scientific centers of excellence and an integrated scientific space within the OIC area. He reaffirmed, in this regard, the continuous commitment of the OIC General Secretariat to facilitate such a collaboration with the COMSTech Secretariat, within the framework of the recently established OIC-15 Dialogue Platform.

The COMSTech Coordinator General, H.E. Dr. Muhammad Iqbal Choudhary, offered an extensive overview of COMSTech's recent and ongoing activities. He also briefed the Council on the agenda items and the expected outcomes of the meeting.

The meeting of COMSTech Scientific Advisory Council, held in a hybrid format, brought together scholars and intellectuals from Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Malaysia, Egypt, Sudan, Algeria and Türkiye. The meeting took note of the draft Ten-Year Strategic STI Plan for COMSTech, which is yet to be finalized.

## Islamic University in Uganda Holds 36th Meeting

The 36th Meeting of the Islamic University in Uganda (IUIU), one of the OIC-affiliated Universities, was held on June 9, 2023 in Kampala, Uganda. The meeting was attended by the Council Members from various countries including Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates, in addition to the representatives of Uganda.

In his remarks to the Council meeting, Amb. Askar Mussinov, Assistant Secretary General for Science and Technology, who represented the OIC Secretary-General in this event, noted that IUIU has made remarkable progress in providing quality education, promoting

Islamic values, and fostering an environment of intellectual curiosity and cultural diversity. He underlined the need to focus on upgrading academic programs, promoting innovative research, and ensuring the overall development of students. He highlighted the importance of exploring opportunities for strategic collaboration and partnerships that will enable IUIU to expand its global footprint and enhance its societal contribution.

The meeting was attended by the Head of the Ugandan Government's delegation to the meeting the Rt. Hon. Gen. Moses Ali, First Deputy Prime Minister and Leader of Gov-

ernment Business in Parliament, who commended the OIC and its institutions for their continuous support and guidance to the IUIU. IUIU, which started off with only 88 students in 1988, now has over 8,000 students with 8 faculties, compared to only 2 at its inception. IUIU has made further strides in terms of academic performance as well as in research and community outreach activities. It has won local and international awards for its quality performance in terms of teaching and innovation. It is currently constructing the Faculty of Engineering, a state-of-the-art library, and a new students' hostel.

## OIC, IRCICA and Ahmadu Bello University Organize Conference on Islamic Learning and Scholarship in Africa

The OIC General Secretariat organized, jointly with IRCICA, Arewa House, and Ahmadu Bello University, on June 13-15, 2023 at Kaduna State, Nigeria, an International Conference on "Islamic Learning and Scholarship in Africa".

The opening ceremony was addressed by prominent personalities, including Sultan of Sokoto, the Emir of Zazzau, the Executive Governor of Kaduna State, the Deputy Governor of Kano State, and the Vice-Chancellor of Ahmadu Bello University.

The event focused on Islamic sciences and their impact on the religious, political, social, economic and cultural history of Africa.

The Conference was designed to explore the in-depth intellectual and spiritual exchanges

among populations and scholars across the extensive geography of Africa, including the Arab Maghreb, and East, West and Central Africa, as well as to reflect on the historical spread of Islamic scholarship in Africa, as well as its current status and future trends.

In his statement to this interdisciplinary international conference, delivered on his behalf by Dr. Lhoucine Rhazoui, Director of Cultural Affairs, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, commended the initiative of jointly organizing this event, which reflects the OIC General Secretariat's keen desire to celebrate Islamic scholarship and highlight the role played by some devoted scholars and thinkers in enhancing its global standing of Islamic culture and civilization.



The joint organization of this Conference is also a reaffirmation of the OIC's firm belief in the power of education, learning, academia and cultural diplomacy.

## OIC Takes Stock of Situation of Rohingya Refugees in Cox's Bazar



As part of a joint field visit conducted, on August 6-11, 2023, with representatives from the UNHCR, the Islamic Solidarity Fund (ISF), and a number of humanitarian organizations and donors, the OIC General Secretariat Delegation visited the Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar, and particularly the "Teknouf" and "Akhia" camps.

The Delegation took stock of the situation of the Rohingya refugees, and held meetings with local authorities.

Amb. Tarig Ali Bakheet, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian, Cultural and Social Affairs, reaffirmed the OIC's commitment to seeking, jointly with international partners, to provide funding sources for humanitarian action in the camps.

Amb. Bakheet paid tribute to the Government of Bangladesh for its great efforts to provide aid to the Rohingya community, despite internal economic obligations and declining international support. He also hailed the support provided by the United Nations, especially UNHCR, and the OIC Member States, and stressed the need to mobilize financial resources in order to increase humanitarian assistance.

Amb. Bakheet emphasized the importance of creating an adequate environment for the safe and voluntary return of Rohingya refugees to their homeland in Myanmar, being the lasting solution to the crisis, while granting them their full rights, including the right to nationality. He also affirmed the OIC's commitment to pursue diplomatic efforts within the framework of the International Court of Justice.

The visit was designed to follow up on the

resolutions issued by the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers with regard to the Rohingya issue, and to mobilize more financial resources to support Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, which bears the largest share of the burden of hosting them on its territory.

Upon its arrival in the capital, Dhaka, the Delegation held a meeting with representatives from the UNHCR Office, as well as an expanded meeting with representatives from all UN agencies operating in Bangladesh.

During this visit, the OIC Delegation met with H.E. Dr. Ankur Rahman, Minister of Disaster Management, H.E. Amb. Masoud bin Momen, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Mr. Tofzel Hussain Meh, Senior Advisor with the Office of the Prime Minister of Bangladesh.

Amb. Bakheet emphasized, during these meetings, the priority attached to the Rohingya issue in the OIC's humanitarian and diplomatic agenda, in line with the Resolutions adopted by the Islamic Summit and the Council of Foreign Ministers.

For their part, officials in Bangladesh expressed thanks to the OIC Delegation for this joint visit with UNHCR and some donor agencies to Rohingya camps. They considered this visit as a qualitative step forward reflecting the commitment of the OIC and international partners to supporting the Rohingya Cause and mobilizing the needed humanitarian aid for the refugees and for the host communities.

On May 28, 2023, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Houssein Ibrahim Taha, who paid

an official visit to Bangladesh, held a meeting, in Dhaka, with the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, H.E. Dr. Abul Kalam Abdul Momen.

Both sides expressed satisfaction with the level of cooperation between the OIC and Bangladesh, and discussed ways and means to further enhance it.

The Secretary-General paid tribute to Bangladesh for providing humanitarian assistance and shelter to nearly 1.2 million Rohingya refugees. He also thanked Bangladesh for hosting and supporting the Islamic University of Technology (IUT).

For his part, the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh expressed appreciation for the significant role played by the OIC and for its support to the Rohingya people.

Both sides discussed a number of significant issues on the OIC agenda, and stressed the need for increased cooperation and solidarity to address them.

On the other hand, the 49th session of the Governing Board of the Islamic University of Technology (IUT) convened on May 29, 2023, in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Saleh Bin Ibrahim Al-Qasoumi, Deputy Minister for International Cooperation in the Ministry of Education of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

At the outset of the meeting, Amb. Askar Mussinov, Assistant Secretary-General for Science and Technology, expressed, on behalf of H.E. Mr. Houssein Ibrahim Taha, OIC Secretary-General and IUT Chancellor, deep gratitude to the Government of Bangladesh for its unwavering support and commitment to the development and progress of the IUT.



## Nigeria's Halal Market to Hit \$180bn by 2027

### Iman Ali Liaqat (D. S.)

Driven by one of the largest global Muslim populations, Nigeria has become the world's eighth-largest domestic halal economy market. Domestic spending on halal economy products and services in Nigeria reached US\$107 billion in 2022, and it is expected to grow at a CAGR of 10.7% to reach US\$180 billion by 2027.

The Nigeria Halal Economy Report 2023 aims to inspire and empower government entities in Nigeria, industries, and investors to grow Nigeria's presence in the global and regional halal economy. Simplifying trade regulations, enhancing production competitiveness, increasing consumer awareness, and fostering partnerships are some strategies that can help Nigeria develop and grow its halal economy.

The Report offers insights and recommendations to enable Nigeria to tap into the potential of its halal market, and contribute to the growth of the global halal industry.

Overall, the Report estimates Nigeria's halal economic opportunity to further boost its GDP by US\$1.6 billion annually within the next four years through incremental exports, import substitution, and FDI opportunities. It presents key sectors, markets, and overall strategic areas based on a National Ha-

lal Economy Strategy framework to expand trade and investment opportunities.

Globally, Muslim consumer spending on food, clothing, media and recreation, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and travel was worth US\$2.3 trillion in 2022. Nigeria's Muslim consumer spend totals US\$107 billion, accounting for 4.7% of the global spend and 22.7% of Africa's spend. Nigeria's Islamic finance assets were estimated to be worth US\$3.3 billion. This positions Nigeria as the second-largest halal market in Africa after Egypt.

Nigeria has a strong agriculture and media sector base and a developing Islamic finance ecosystem globally. It is the largest producer of Cassava in the world, producing over 19% of global production. Nollywood is the world's second-largest film industry, which also opens opportunities for Islamic-themed movies. Regionally, Nigeria is the largest Sukuk issuer in Africa, and Lagos has become West Africa's fashion capital.

In terms of trade, Nigeria is the 11th largest exporter of halal products to OIC within the African region. It exported a total of US\$379 million in halal products (food, pharma, and cosmetics) to OIC countries. In Islamic finance, many opportunities exist to support the development of halal products and services. These include Shariah-compliant,

traditional, and alternative working capital finance and business asset finance for SMEs. The halal economy is increasingly being targeted by multinationals, startups, governments, and investors as a high-growth opportunity across multiple sectors. Nigeria has seen active investments in technology-driven businesses. In 2022, global investments in the halal economy were estimated at US\$15.7 billion. Nigeria accounted for 3% of that, or US\$448 million. Nigeria is among the rapidly growing ecosystems in the Islamic FinTech market, and is among the top 10 globally by volume of Islamic FinTech (7 FinTech firms).

In 2022, disclosed M&A, PE, and VC investments in the halal economy of Nigeria were worth US\$448 million across nine deals. In Africa, Nigeria ranked second for the number of deals but first in terms of the value of those deals. In the Global Islamic Economy Indicator (GIEI), in 2021, Nigeria ranked 34 out of the 81 countries measured in the indicator.

Nigeria's consumers drive the halal economy opportunity. Around 90% of Nigeria's Muslim population resides in the country's northern region. Given that, Muslim consumers tend to assume meat from local markets to be halal, lacking awareness of the need for halal certification.

## OIC Calls for Close Cooperation to Accelerate Fight Against Poverty



The 39th Follow-up Committee Meeting of the OIC Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation (COMCEC) was held in Ankara, Türkiye, on May 23-24, 2023.

In his message to the meeting, the OIC Sec-

retary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, called on all Member States to collaborate more closely and share experiences towards accelerating poverty alleviation, especially in the least developed countries. He also urged Member States to actively participate in the

forthcoming 9th OIC Ministerial Conference on Food Security and Agricultural Development, to be held in Doha, Qatar, on October 1-2, 2023, in order to come out with concrete resolutions to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 and speed up the recovery of the agriculture and food security sectors.

The Ankara Meeting reviewed the status of implementation of various COMCEC projects in the areas of trade and investment, agriculture, tourism, and financial development, private sector and poverty alleviation, among others. It approved the Draft Agenda of the 39th General Assembly of COMCEC, to be held in Istanbul, Türkiye, on December 2-5, 2023.

The COMCEC Follow-up Committee meets annually to review the state of implementation of the Resolutions issued by the COMCEC Ministerial Sessions in the area of economic and trade development, as well as to prepare the working documents for the next sessions.

## Secretary-General Calls on ICCIA to Continue Supporting Small Businesses

The 35th Board of Directors Meeting of the Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (ICCIA) was held in Baku, Azerbaijan, on July 17-18, 2023.

In his message to the Meeting, the OIC Secretary, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, called on the ICCIA and its Board Members to focus, in 2023 and 2024, on specific programs in priority areas for SMEs and MSMEs, including digitalization, investment and tourism. He highlighted the significant role of ICCIA and its Board in achieving economic recovery in the OIC Member States, as well

as in promoting intra-OIC trade and investment, agriculture, rural development, food security, tourism and Islamic financial services, infrastructure development, as well as women and youth employment. This, he added, largely contributes to the OIC's mission and vision, as well as to the well-being of the OIC peoples.

The Secretary-General urged the ICCIA's Board Members to review and adopt the various agriculture-related programs and projects, as well as the recommendations that would be submitted to the 9th OIC

Ministerial Conference on Food Security and Agricultural Development (MCF SAD), to be held in Doha, Qatar, on October 1-2, 2023.

The Meeting reviewed the recommendations and projects in the areas of investment, tourism, Halal industry, and capacity building, to be submitted to the ICCIA's General Assembly for adoption.

The ICCIA signed a Memorandum of Understanding with four partner institutions in Azerbaijan for the organization of a Halal Forum in Baku, Azerbaijan, in 2024.

## Secretary-General Calls for Stimulating Intra-OIC trade

The 40th Ordinary Session of the Islamic Center for Development of Trade (ICDT) was held in Rabat, Morocco, on May 29-30, 2023.

In his message to the Meeting, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, called on the ICDT Board Members to step up efforts in order to further stimulate

intra-OIC trade, by focusing, in 2023 and 2024, on specific programs in the fields of e-commerce, digitalization, investment and tourism.

The Secretary-General also called on the OIC Member States to provide the needed support for the successful organization of the 18th OIC Trade Fair, held in Lahore, Paki-

stan, on June 16-18, 2023, and the 3rd OIC Tourism Fair, to be held in Doha, Qatar, on November 20-22, 2023.

The meeting reviewed the programs and projects to be implemented in 2023 and 2024 in the areas of trade, investment, tourism and capacity-building. It also approved the ICDT Budget for 2024.

## Islamic Development Bank: Key Financing Institution in the OIC Countries

In his speech at the opening session of the 48th Annual Meeting of the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) Group, held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on May 11, 2023, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, stressed that in light of emerging development challenges and the need to support the OIC Member States' efforts towards achieving sustainable, resilient and inclusive growth, the role of the IsDB Group, as the key development financing institution of the OIC Member States, is gaining increasing importance.

Speaking about the Member States' performance in the post-COVID-19 recovery phase, the Secretary-General underscored the need to provide high-quality social and

physical infrastructure in the OIC countries, being necessary for promoting inclusive and resilient economic recovery. He underlined, in this regard, the importance of the IsDB's support for the implementation of the OIC's infrastructure projects.

The Secretary-General also highlighted the importance of agriculture in achieving sustainable development and enhancing food security in OIC Member States. In this regard, he commended the IsDB's various initiatives designed to address food insecurity and increase agricultural productivity in Member States.

The opening session was also addressed by H.E. Mr. Romuald Wadagni, Minister of Economy and Finance of the Republic of

Benin, Chairman of the IsDB Board of Governors, H.E. Mr. Mohammed Al Jadaan, Minister of Finance of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Chairman of the 48th Annual Meeting of the IsDB Board of Governors, and H.E. Dr. Muhammad Al Jasser, President of IsDB Group.

Under the theme of "Partnerships to Fend Off Crises", the 48th Annual Meeting of the IsDB Group kicked off on May 10, 2023, in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and concluded on May 13, 2023. The meeting addressed the administrative, financial and operational activities of the IsDB Group. It also discussed development challenges facing the IsDB's Member Countries and the possible solutions.

## Incorporating Human Rights into Business Practices Improves People's Lives

The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, inaugurated the 11th session of the OIC Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC), held in Jeddah on May 21-25, 2023.

Addressing the meeting, the Secretary-General commended the IPHRC's invaluable contribution to the promotion and protection of all human rights, in accordance with International Human Rights Law, in full independence, impartiality, and objectivity. He indicated that the IPHRC has proven its usefulness as a body that continues to provide objective viewpoints on all human rights issues of concern to the OIC.

The Secretary-General took this opportunity to extend his thanks to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Chair of the Islamic Summit, and HRH Prince Muhammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, Crown Prince and Prime Minister, for Saudi Arabia's continuous support to the IPHRC and the OIC activities.

The Secretary-General noted that the theme of discussion in this session is unique, as it seeks to achieve qualitative and quantitative improvement in people's lives by incorporating human rights into business practices within the OIC geographical area. He explained that business and private institutions are the lifeblood of the economy, and that sustainable development should be

achieved through full awareness of human rights. Business stakeholders, he added, such as multinational corporations, are not

*Business and private institutions are the lifeblood of the economy, and that sustainable development should be achieved through full awareness of human rights*

only conducting business but are also shaping public policy and influencing social and political ecosystems, thus demonstrating the impact of business activities on human

rights.

The Secretary-General indicated that the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, adopted in 2011, provide a framework for governments, companies, and civil society to promote and protect human rights in the context of business activities. These principles, he added, are based on three pillars, namely the duty of the State to protect human rights, corporate responsibility to respect them, and access to ways to address human rights violations against victims. Accordingly, companies are called on to take responsibility for respecting human rights in all that relates to business activities, supply chains, and relations with stakeholders, including employees, customers, and communities.

The Secretary-General stressed that the concept of human rights has a central place in the teachings of the sublime Islamic religion, and that companies are expected to respect and promote this concept in their operations. He also noted that Islamic principles provide guidance regarding the responsibilities of individuals and companies toward each other and toward society as a whole, and that these principles can be applied in the context of business and human rights.

## ICESCO : Training Session in Jordan on Crisis-sensitive Educational Planning



The Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) held, in Amman, Jordan, a training session on capacity-building in educational planning in times of crises, jointly with the Jordanian National Commission for Education, Culture and Science. The session aimed to provide planners with the necessary skills for educational planning in times of crises, spread knowledge, promote the sharing of experi-

ence and expertise among participants, and discuss new trends in the field. The four-day training session, which kicked off on August 7, 2023, focused on practical applications to build the capacities of educational planners. The session benefited 25 educational planners, officials and workers in planning departments and units within relevant ministries, bodies and centers in Jordan.

The opening session saw the attendance of Ms. Ibtisam Aqab Ayoub, Secretary-General of the Jordanian National Commission, who commended ICESCO's efforts to develop educational systems and provide support for its Member States.

For his part, Mr. Sultan Al-Khalif, Head of the Sector of Education at the Jordanian National Commission, delivered ICESCO's statement in which he highlighted the significance of the session in contributing to building the capacities of planners in the field of educational planning during crises.

The training session focused on the fundamentals, principles and types of crisis-sensitive planning, and addressed its purpose, stages and areas, as well as the practical applications for preparing crisis-sensitive educational plans. It was also an opportunity to highlight participants' expertise and experience in educational planning in times of crises, and to share the Jordanian experience in this field.

## Launch of "CanSat" Satellite at ICESCO's Workshop in Türkiye

The 3rd training workshop on the design of an educational satellite (CanSat) held by the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO), in partnership with Istanbul Technical University in Türkiye, concluded with the successful launch of the satellite from Aksaray.

The event was organized from July 31 to August 4, 2023 for 40 researchers and students from 27 ICESCO Member States, in the presence of high-level officials, astronauts and international space science experts. It featured theoretical presentations about "CanSat" and the technologies used in its design, along with practical workshops to explain the use of the accelerometer, magnetometer and gyroscope sensor, in addition to data collection and analysis, and the development and testing of landing systems.

This successful experiment was followed by a closing ceremony held at Aksaray rocket launch range, during which Dr. Raheel Qamar, Head of the Science and Technology Sector at ICESCO, underlined the Organization's commitment to supporting youth capacities in Muslim countries.



For his part, Dr. Alim Rüstem Aslan, Professor of Aerospace Engineering at Istanbul Technical University, and the supervisor of the Workshop, highlighted the importance of strengthening partnerships between organizations, universities and research centers to develop innovation, technology and space science.

At the end of the ceremony, Certificates of

Achievement were granted to the Workshop participants who expressed their thanks to ICESCO and to the University for their support to young people's skills in space technology. Tribute was also paid to the experts and officials in recognition of their efforts to ensure the success of the 3rd edition of the Workshop in Türkiye and the launch of the educational satellite "CanSat".

## ICESCO Seminar Calls for Promoting Peace Culture and Countering Hatred



The high-level officials and international specialized experts participating in the International Seminar : “Germany and the Islamic World: Understanding and Developing,” held at ICESCO headquarters, on July 27, 2023, were unanimous in stressing the need to promote the culture of peace, dialogue and mutual understanding, open up new prospects for understanding and cultural exchange, uphold the values of mercy, and counter hatred and provocation.

The Seminar, held by ICESCO in partnership with the German Institute for Dialogue and Understanding “Mouatana,” began with the recitation of verses from the Holy Quran, followed by an address by Dr. Salim M. AlMalik, ICESCO Director-General, in which he asserted that the unique relationship between the Islamic world and Germany is worth reflecting on and analyzing. He pointed out that the Arab-Islamic culture has constituted, for centuries, a rich field of study for intellectuals and researchers, with a high level of scientific impartiality and in-depth analysis. He hailed the inspiring approach adopted by German thinkers, which resulted in highlighting the treasures of the Arab-Islamic heritage and paved the way for new methods of serious research in this regard.

The Director-General indicated that the world is currently in dire need of consolidating mutual understanding and finding better ways to express cultural differences in a

civilized manner, far from intolerance and insults against sanctities.

Dr. Rana Tanveer Hussain, Federal Minister of Education and Professional Training of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, stressed, in her address to the Seminar, the importance of unity and cooperation in building a bright future for all, noting that the seminar is a unique opportunity to enhance cooperation

*The world is currently in dire need of consolidating mutual understanding and finding better ways to express cultural differences*

and mobilize the capacities, expertise and knowledge of Islamic countries.

Mr. Robert Dölger, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Kingdom of Morocco, pointed out that Arab studies on European Orientalism open up new prospects on the Arab world and help to strengthen mutual understanding and cultural exchange among peoples.

Mr. Abdul Samad Al-Yazidi, Director-General of the German Institute for Dialogue and Understanding “Mouatana,” stressed the importance of gaining a true understanding of the concept of citizenship, as every citi-

zen is an ambassador of his or her country. He called for promoting the values of Islamic tolerance and peace in Germany in order to be able to spread the message of mercy to the whole world, and counter hatred and provocation.

The first working session featured papers dealing extensively with the relations between Germany and the Islamic world, with the participation of Mr. Abdul Samad Al-Yazidi, Dr. Muhammad Sharif, Advisor to ICESCO’s Science and Technology Sector, and Ms. Rabab Nissabieh, Public Relations Expert at the Central Council of Muslims in Germany.

At the end of the session, the Director-General of “Mouatana” Institute presented the ICESCO Director-General with the Institute’s Shield and an ancient stone from Berlin Wall. For his part, Dr. AlMalik presented Mr. Al-Yazidi with ICESCO’s Shield in recognition of his efforts and contributions to promote inter-civilizational dialogue.

In the second working session, Dr. Abdulmalik Hibaoui, President of the German-Moroccan Council in Germany and Head of the Department of Religious Dialogue at Mouatana Institute, presented an academic analysis of his book “German Orientalism: Study on Emergence, Evolution, and the Research Fields,” recently published by ICESCO, followed by critical interventions by Dr. Hatem El-Jawhari and Dr. Mohammed Massoudi.

## Seminar on Literacy Policies for Women empowerment in Senegal



A national seminar was held by the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO), on July 11, 2023, in Dakar, Senegal, to discuss literacy policies and programs for women's empowerment. The Seminar was held in cooperation with the Senegalese National Commission for Education, Science and Culture, under the patronage of Mr. Cheikh Oumar Anne, President of the National Commission, Minister of National Education of the Republic of Senegal.

The Seminar saw the participation of several decision-makers from ministries concerned with education and women's issues, representatives from NGOs and women's organizations, along with experts in literacy and non-formal education.

The Seminar was designed to assess literacy and non-formal education policies and programs targeting women in Senegal, to highlight best practices and innovations, and to identify current challenges facing these policies and programs. It was also an opportunity to propose recommendations and identify future prospects for women's literacy programs in Senegal.

In his opening address, Mr. Aliou Ly, Secretary General of the Senegalese National Commission, commended ICESCO's leading roles and sustained support to Senegal through a number of programs and projects falling within its areas of competence.

Representing ICESCO, Dr. Koumbou Barry, Head of the Education Sector, along with a number of the Sector's experts, took part,

via videoconference, in the opening session of the Seminar. The Head of the Sector delivered the OIC's statement in which he stressed the importance of combating illiteracy and promoting women's socio-economic empowerment to enable them to assume their roles and contribute to comprehensive sustainable development.

On the other hand, The Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO), the Ministry of Education in the Republic of Yemen, and the Benevolence Coalition for Humanitarian Relief (BCHR) Foundation, signed an agreement to implement a remedial education project for out-of-school girls in Yemen.

The project is part of cooperation between ICESCO and King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre (KSRelief) to provide the necessary educational support and teaching resources and offer a second educational opportunity to dropout girls.

The Agreement was signed, remotely, on July 19, 2023, by Dr. Salim M. AlMalik, ICESCO Director General, Dr. Tareq Salem al-Abkari, Yemeni Minister of Education, and Eng. Fahmi bin Mansour, CEO of BCHR.

During the signing ceremony, which was attended by Dr. Koumbou Barry, Head of ICESCO's Education Sector, and Mr. Anar Karimov, Head of ICESCO's Partnerships and International Cooperation Sector, Dr. AlMalik expressed his thanks and gratitude to KSRelief for its generous funding of this important project, noting that ICESCO accords major importance to education given its role

in achieving sustainable development and for being the best investment to ensure a better future.

For his part, Dr. Al-Akbari welcomed the agreement which, he said, will help develop the education system in Yemen, empower future generations, and protect them from destructive ideas, underlining the Ministry's willingness to strengthen cooperation with ICESCO.

The Foundation's CEO welcomed the launch of the project, which provides a valuable service to out-of-school girls in Yemen, and thanked the Yemeni Ministry, ICESCO, and KSRelief for supporting the project whose initial phases have been highly successful.

Under the terms of the Agreement, BCHR will undertake the implementation of the project in 7 Yemeni governorates over a 12-month period, with funding from KSRelief, while ICESCO will oversee its management and monitor all its implementation phases. In addition, the project will equip 21 schools for girls' education in the beneficiary areas, provide school bags and supplies to 19,000 girls, organize training programs to develop the capacities of 350 professionals in the field of girls' education, and equip 100 alternative classrooms to take in out-of-school girls and those in displacement camps. It will also provide professional support for the families of dropout girls, facilitate procedures for admitting displaced girls into schools, and create awareness-raising programs that encourage girls' schooling.

## ICESCO Launches Bio-waste Food Award



The Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) announced the launch of the first edition of its Bio-Waste Food Award, which aims to support entrepreneurs and startups in developing innovative technologies to extract protein, fat and carbohydrates from wasted food, and to recycle waste in a way that benefits Islamic societies. Three prizes will be awarded to the three best projects in ICESCO Member States, to be selected by a jury composed of international experts.

The Award aims to encourage youth and women in Islamic countries to develop innovative solutions to optimize benefits from wasted food, and thus contribute to achieving food security. It is designed to support relevant specialists and entrepreneurs in the Green Economy to develop innovative technologies in the field of food security. The Award will be granted to three winners who will receive US\$30,000, US\$15,000, and US\$5,000, respectively.

The projects participating in the competition will be evaluated by the Jury in two stages. In the first stage, the Jury will first select the best five projects, the owners of which

will then be invited to present them before the Jury in order to assess the effectiveness of the proposed technology. In the second stage, the most innovative, environment-friendly projects that contribute to development and job creation are selected in order to determine the three winners of the Award.

Persons interested in participating in this contest must fill in the Award Form available on ICESCO's website via the following link: <https://forms.office.com/r/XykXuzw395>, and send their application file no later than August 31, 2023, to: [sciences@icesco.org](mailto:sciences@icesco.org).

The application file should include the Contest application letter, the CV of the participant or – in case of a startup - of all members of the project team; a summary of the project (5 pages maximum), explaining the idea and the technique of extracting the components of food bars, and physical samples of the finished products, after the pre-selection phase, to be sent to the address to be determined later.

On the other hand, ICESCO held, jointly with the Lebanese National Commission for UNESCO, a three-day training session

on valorizing and recycling solid waste. The session kicked off on June 20, 2023, at AZM University in Tripoli, Lebanon, under the auspices of the Lebanese Ministry of Environment.

At the opening of the workshop, Dr. Foued El Ayni, Programs Manager at ICESCO Sciences and Technologies Sector, highlighted ICESCO's efforts to contribute to environmental protection and develop smart, resilient, and sustainable cities in the Islamic world. He called on the university students participating in the workshop to take advantage of the expertise provided by waste management specialists and experts.

For her part, Mrs. Heba Nashabe, Secretary-General of the Lebanese National Commission, commended ICESCO's continuous support to its Member States, noting that the training session aims at raising awareness about waste management methods and mechanisms, and the importance of circular economy in enhancing environmental protection and preserving natural resources, as well as in building the capacities of youth and all those operating in the field.

## ICESCO Holds Training Session for Arabic Teachers in Japan



The Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) held, jointly with Keio University in Japan a two-day training session on “Innovative methods for teaching Arabic to non-Arabic speakers”. The session was designed to enhance the skills of Arabic teachers who teach non-Arabic speakers in Japan, to introduce them to innovative approaches and methodologies in this field, and also to provide insights into the distinctive characteristics of the Arabic language and the importance of understanding Arabic culture and its role in teaching Arabic to non-native speakers. In her address during the closing ceremony of the session, Dr. Kaoru Yamamoto, Professor of Policy Management at Keio University, Head of the Arabic Language Laboratory, conveyed her gratitude and appreciation

to ICESCO for this significant initiative designed to promote scientific cooperation between ICESCO and the University and for holding this outstanding session for Arabic teachers in Japan, noting that she is looking forward to further cooperation in this regard.

For his part, Dr. Anas H. Saeed Al-Nuaimi, Expert at ICESCO Center of Arabic for Non-Arabic Speakers, delivered the Organization’s statement in which he indicated that ICESCO’s vision and strategic orientations foster openness and scientific cooperation with the world’s universities, while striving to advance the Arabic language within the Islamic world and beyond.

The training session saw the participation of over 20 teachers and education officials from various Japanese universities and insti-

tutes who are actively involved in teaching Arabic in Japanese universities and institutions. ICESCO’s representative oversaw the organizational aspects on the first day of the session, while Dr. Rawya Jamous, Assistant Professor of Arabic to non-Arabic speakers at the University of Keio, supervised the proceedings of the second day.

On May 30, 2023, Dr. Salim M. AlMalik, Director-General of ICESCO, received Mr. Mohamed Ben Amor, Director-General of the Arab Information and Communication Technologies Organization (AICTO). The meeting discussed prospects for cooperation between the two Organizations to support Member States’ efforts in promoting digital transformation and cyber-security, and in strengthening the presence of the Arabic language on the Internet.

Both sides affirmed their keenness to build fruitful cooperation on issues related to digitalization, notably the strengthening of digital trust, in order to encourage countries to engage in digital transformation and thus contribute to bridging the digital divide and achieving digital inclusion.

The meeting discussed specific proposals for cooperation between ICESCO and AICTO, notably providing capacity-building for young people and new generations in the fields of technology to keep pace with the rapid technological evolution, promoting Arabic digital content and the presence of the Arabic language on the Internet, and contributing to strengthening the protection of personal data on the Internet in light of AI developments.

## ICESCO Holds Training Workshop on Addressing Food Security Challenges in the Sahel Region

The Science and Technology Sector of the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) held, in partnership with COMSTEC and the Islamic Organization for Food Security, a training workshop on “Addressing Food Security Challenges in the Sahel Region”. The workshop was held in Niger in cooperation with the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel, with the participation of 12 countries from the region. Held in hybrid format, the five-day work-

shop, which kicked off on May 15, 2023, aimed at sharing knowledge and experience in the field of food security, promoting cooperation in developing innovative strategies to overcome food-related challenges in the Sahel region, and discussing ways to disseminate best practices to address the impact of climate change.

At the opening of the workshop, Dr. Alambedji Abba Issa, Minister of Agriculture of Niger, highlighted his country’s sustained efforts to enhance food security and con-

tribute to achieving community solidarity and sustainable development.

For his part, Dr. Muhammed Sharif, Advisor at ICESCO’s Science and Technology Sector, stressed the need to find sustainable solutions to achieve food security, being a key element in achieving peace and sustainable development. He highlighted ICESCO’s efforts to deal with food security challenges through several initiatives in the fields of climate change, smart agriculture, and resilient cities.

## IsDB Program for Education Helps Train 675,000 Teachers



It is exciting to see how the 57 IsDB Member Countries, spread across four continents, are striving to build a future that blends a purposeful embrace of cutting-edge technologies with the rich heritage of Islam, situating them as a vibrant source of education and culture.

Many IsDB Member Countries are scaling up investments in education, fully cognizant of the fact that a well-educated and properly skilled workforce is vital towards diversifying their economies and fostering peaceful and prosperous societies.

Combining this appreciation of education's central role in society with their financial strength, many high-income Member Countries can partner with lower-income Member Countries to invest more in education, thereby accelerating their development and helping them better cope with future global crises.

This partnership is vitally needed at a time when the lower-income Member Countries are facing intense educational crisis – a crisis that has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Before the pandemic, around half of the world's 10-year-olds already struggled to read and comprehend a basic

story. Today, it is estimated that this level is closer to 70 percent.

The gap between the skills that children need to thrive and what they develop now risks widening dramatically, with dire consequences for global economic growth, human capital development, and socio-political stability.

It has been estimated that today's generation stands to lose \$17 trillion in future lifetime earnings because of interrupted learning during the recent pandemic. The world simply cannot afford a loss of that magnitude when it should instead be doing all it can to secure a more stable, safe, and prosperous future.

Given the rising interest rates and public debt burdens, lower-income countries need new education financing options, or they risk having to trim education budgets at a time when all countries should be boosting them instead.

In partnership with the IsDB and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), the Gulf Member Countries can draw on their innovation potential and financial resources to help leverage investment in schooling in lower-income countries, blending public

and private funding for education where it is needed the most.

IsDB support has targeted improving learning outcomes, skills, and education training, especially for women and young people in rural areas. GPE's aim is to bring together donors, foundations, businesses, and international agencies, focusing their expertise and financial strength on the education needs of lower-income countries. In 2022 alone, GPE grants benefited 107 million students and helped train 675,000 teachers.

Through innovative approaches like the Multiplier Grant, GPE investments catalyzed another \$1 billion in additional financing from development agencies and philanthropic foundations in 2022, crowding in more financing for education globally.

Donor countries and institutions across the Gulf can join IsDB and GPE in driving levels of blended financing higher, so that lower-income countries can transform entire education systems.

Saudi Arabia and Kuwait have already shown their willingness to be more actively involved by becoming new GPE donor countries, setting a foundation for future collaboration and investment.

## Filipino Muslims Take Pride in the Oldest Tawi-Tawi Mosque



According to local folktales, the first mosque to be established in the Philippines was built in 1380 by Arab trader Sheikh Makhdum Karim, which makes it also one of the oldest in Southeast Asia. Legend has it that the pillars of Sheikh Makhdum Mosque in Tawi-Tawi were unbreakable. They survived many attempts at destruction over the past six centuries and until today remain standing.

"The establishment of the Sheikh Makhdum Mosque in the 14th century ushered the beginning of Islamization in the Philippines," said Prof. Julkipli Wadi, Dean of the Institute of Islamic Studies at the University of the Philippines. "That was 200 years before the advent of Spanish colonialism and the entrenchment of the Westernized version of Christianity in this part of Southeast Asia."

The pillars of the small white mosque in the municipality of Simunul in the southernmost island province of the Philippines are believed to come from the original mosque and hold a special place in the heart of the local people.

"Legend has it that there were various attempts to remove the old pillars of the mosque. For some reason, those attempts were unsuccessful. Hence, some old folks thought that those pillars were a source of

blessings and people began to take pieces from them and use them as amulets," Prof. Wadi told Arab News. "That led the local government to protect the pillars with plastic glass so that people would not be able to carve pieces from them and keep them for worship."

The mosque was burned down during the Japanese invasion of 1941 — when everything but the pillars was turned to ashes — and rebuilt in the 1960s, with restoration works done also more recently. In 2013, President Benigno S. Aquino signed a Republic Act declaring Sheikh Makhdum Mosque a national historical landmark.

Sheikh Makhdum was one of the seven legendary preachers who arrived by sea and introduced Islam to Mindanao and Sulu. They all belonged to a branch of the Naqshbandi Sufi order, which flourished in Central Asia and eventually spread to the Indian subcontinent, particularly today's Gujarat — a strategic area of the Silk Road connecting China, India, and the Islamic world of the 13th and 14th centuries.

"It's enduring physical evidence of Islam in the country," said Prof. Darwin Absari from the University of the Philippines' Institute of Islamic Studies. "It connects the coun-

try to the larger community of Muslims in Southeast Asia and the whole of the Islamic world."

The Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, of which Tawi-Tawi is part, celebrates Sheikh Makhdum Karim Day as a public holiday on November 7.

In June, Filipino Muslims urged the Senate to declare the day a non-working holiday across the whole Philippines, as the Bangsamoro Commission for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage argued that "for more than six centuries, the mosque built under Makhdum's guidance served as a beacon of continuing legacy and pride of all Muslim Filipinos" and evidence of the "immense contribution of the Islamic faith to the enrichment, vibrancy and diversity" of Philippine culture.

Muslims constitute roughly 6 percent of the country's 110 million predominantly Catholic population. Most live on the southern islands of Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago.

The Tawi-Tawi mosque is a source of pride not just for the little province but the whole region of the Muslim south. Its existence implies, according to Prof. Nasser Kadil from the Mindanao State University, that Islam "has been deeply rooted in the province".

## UN HRC Resolution 53/1 on Countering Religious Hatred: Existing Achievements and Hopes for Impact

The Resolution entitled “Countering religious hatred constituting incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence” (A/HRC/RES/53/1), adopted on July 12, 2023 by the United Nations Human Rights Council at its 53rd session, is a major international achievement toward establishing global benchmarks for dealing with sanctities and the religious symbols of peoples. The draft resolution was submitted by Pakistan and the State of Palestine on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

Resolution 53/1 is also a major victory for the OIC’s diplomacy, through its Group of Countries in the Human Rights Council. It comes to consolidate previous achievements of the OIC, particularly the adoption, in April 2011, of the historic HRC Resolution 16/18 entitled “Combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against, persons based on religion or belief.” The draft resolution was submitted by Pakistan on behalf of the OIC Member States in the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations; and it was on the basis of Resolution 16/18 that the Istanbul Process was established in partnership between the OIC General Secretariat and the US Department of State.

While Resolution 53/1 was adopted at an international juncture plagued by the act of desecration of the Holy Quran, it is not likely that it will face the same fate as UNGA Resolution 64/156 on “Combating Defamation of Religions”, adopted in March 2010. The latter resolution, issued amid the controversy over the banning of the construction of minarets in Switzerland, lost the majority only one year after its adoption, after having been the target of successive campaigns by many Western countries and human rights organizations, some of which went as far as stigmatizing it as a “global blasphemy law.”

Various factors support optimism that Resolution 53/1 will not be struck down in future HRC sessions. Foremost among these factors are the significant shift in the “voting mood” with regard to such resolutions, the tremendous global transformations the world has witnessed in recent years, the intensification of international polarization, and the diminishing Western hegemony that is no longer what it was in 2011. It should, in fact, be noted that Resolution 64/156 was adopted with only 20 countries in favor, 17 against, and 8 abstentions, whereas Resolution 53/1 was adopted with 28 countries in favor, 12 against, and 7 abstentions. This reflects, if anything, the diminishing influence of Western powers whose diplomatic machineries have worked hard to have the two resolutions amended.

The victory of the OIC Group in having the draft resolution adopted by the Human Right Council does not call for rest and relaxation as much as it calls for intensive efforts to make sure Resolution 53/1 will be actually and effectively implemented, especially that it includes mandatory provisions, which is unprecedented in resolutions involving such issues. The same Powers that sought to strike down Resolution 64/156 will now strive to have the recently adopted resolution meet the same fate, in response to internal pressures that will be exerted by the so-called liberals in each country.

It should be underlined, however, that Resolution 53/1 not only benefits Muslim countries which are keen to protect their sanctities and religious symbols from distortion and desecration; it also serves the voice of moderation in the West. It is this very voice that actually helps tip the balance in favor of the moderate liberal discourse, against that of ‘savage’ liberalism. The intellectual battle between moderate and ‘savage’ liberalism is, in fact, still raging in Western, particularly Scandinavian, countries. With regard to freedom of expression and its limitations, the issue is still to be settled in these societies that have accumulated liberal achievements and principles after having endured centuries of intellectual repression and denial of freedom of religious and political opinion.

Our Organization is urgently called on to capitalize on these cumulative international achievements, such as Resolution 53/1 recently adopted by the Human Rights Council; the UNGA Resolution 67/178 on “Combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief”, submitted by Egypt and adopted in December 2012; the UNHRC Resolution 16/18; and the Rabat Plan of Action, adopted in 2012, pursuant to which the UN plan regarding the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility and violence was issued.

It is also necessary to reactivate the Istanbul Process, so that it goes beyond the scope of protocol meetings to enter the sphere of international influence. This involves convincing the Western countries where acts of Holy Quran burning and desecration take place to cooperate in promoting and reactivating this Process, which offers a common ground for global action toward a genuine coexistence among religions, cultures and civilizations.



**Tarek Ladjal**

*Professional Officer at  
the Cabinet of Secretary-  
General*

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## IRCICA: Studies on the Holy Quran



The program titled “Studies on the Holy Quran” involves research on the history of the dissemination of the Holy Quran in the world by means of Masahif (copies of the Quran) and translations of its meanings.

The research consists of scholarly and technical studies on copies of the Holy Quran starting from earliest ones, with comparisons of their orthographical and physical aspects.

The project yielded the following publications : the copies attributed to the time of the Third Caliph, Othman bin Affan and preserved at Topkapı Palace Museum in Istanbul (2007) and in the Central Library of Islamic Manuscripts (originally founded as Mashhad al-Husayn) in Cairo (2009); the copy attributed to the time of the Fourth Caliph Ali bin Abi Talib and preserved in the Manuscripts Library near Sana’a Grand Mosque (2011); the copy attributed to the period of the Third Caliph, Othman bin Affan and preserved at the Islamic Arts Museum in Cairo (2014); the partial copy preserved in the National Library of France, Paris (2015); the partial copy at Tubingen University Library,

Germany (2016); the partial copy at British Library, London (2017); the copy located at the State Library in Berlin, Germany (2018); an enlarged edition of the study on the Topkapı Palace Museum copy with the addition of later findings; and, a copy attributed to the time of the Third Caliph, Othman bin Affan and preserved in the collection of Fahreddin Pasha (known as the “Defender of Madina”) at Topkapı Palace Museum, Istanbul (2020).

The aim of the project is to study and record the processes of the dissemination of the Holy Quran throughout the world according to languages, geographical distribution, and frequency of translations.

Concerning translations that are in printed form, a World Bibliography of Translations of the Meanings of the Holy Quran – Printed Translations (1515-1980) was published in 1986. It provides information about 2672 works, which are the originals, copies and different editions of 551 complete and 883 incomplete translations and selections in 65 languages. The International Islamic Call Society (Tripoli, Libya) offered financial as-

sistance for the publication of this bibliography.

A revised and updated edition of this bibliography has been prepared and made accessible to researchers at IRCICA, covering 4329 printed books in 143 languages published during the period from 1515 to 2015. 1671 of them are complete translations.

Concerning translations of the Holy Quran that are in manuscript form, research projects were undertaken to scan the collections of libraries, archives, research institutions and personal collections, collect data, and compile and publish bibliographies of those translations. Three volumes have been published by IRCICA in the series World Bibliography of Translations of the Holy Quran in Manuscript Form.

Regarding oral/verbal translations and interpretations of the Holy Quran, IRCICA, in cooperation with local institutions, organized and collected recordings of oral translations in some African languages. The recordings are preserved at IRCICA Library.

## ICESCO Releases 10 Academic Studies on Teaching Arabic to non-Arabic Speakers



The Center of Arabic for Non-Arabic Speakers at the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) released the second series of academic studies in the field of teaching Arabic to non-Arabic speakers, as part of the Center's "Specialized Studies" project.

The project aims at enhancing ICESCO's presence in the field of scientific research and publication, consolidating scientific and educational research, keeping pace with educational and knowledge developments in Arabic-language teaching curricula, courses and educational means, and strengthening the Center's relationship with researchers specialized in teaching Arabic to non-Arabic speakers from ICESCO Member States and elsewhere.

The ten publications of the second series address the topic of "teaching Arabic to non-Arabic speakers" from various perspectives. They are authored by a group of experts from different universities representing nine countries: Nigeria, Kyrgyzstan, Morocco, Japan, Turkiye, Jordan, Syria, Qatar and Malaysia.

These publications are titled as follows: Arabic conjugation and its importance in teaching Arabic to non-Arabic speakers; Contextual dictionary of feminine words in Arabic culture to non-Arabic students: issues, experiences and applied models; Teaching Arabic for health purposes for non-Arabic learners: a theoretical study and designing a model educational unit; Strategies for developing morphological awareness among non-Arabic learners; How to transfer non-Arabic learners from the beginner level to the distinguished level in light of ACTFL Standards; Arab-Islamic education in Nigeria: Evolution and future challenges; Enrichments of the levels of reading text in virtual reality applications and mechanisms for language use: Second Life application as a model; Critical thinking and its applications in teaching Arabic to non-Arabic speakers: a vision in theory and practice; and Applications of language blogs in learning and teaching Arabic to non-Arabic speakers.

In the same context, the Center of Arabic for Non-Arabic Speakers of the Islamic

World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) held a training session in the Union of the Comoros on "The Use of Electronic Platforms and Digital Resources in Teaching Arabic for Non-Arabic Speakers", for over 30 educational officials and Arabic-language teachers from various regions.

The four-day session, which kicked off on May 8, 2023 in Moroni, was organized in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and the National Commission for Education, Science and Culture of Comoros as well as the Imam Shafi'i University.

The opening session saw the presence of Mr. Suleiman Saleh Hamad, Secretary-General of the Comoros Ministry of Education, who, in his address, commended ICESCO's role in supporting teachers and educators in the Comoros, through training sessions, activities and programs. It was also attended by Dr. Abdula'uf Abdu Omar, Rector of Imam Shafi'i University, Sayyid Muhammad bin Ali, ICESCO Delegate, and Dr. Ali al-Sayyid Ahmed, Secretary-General of the Comoros National Commission.

## Türkiye

**Capital:** Ankara  
**Total surface area:** 783,562 sq. km  
**Official language:** Turkish  
**Currency:** Lira



Türkiye is a transcontinental country situated mainly on the Anatolian Peninsula in West Asia, with a small portion on the Balkan Peninsula in southeastern Europe. East Thrace, the European part of Türkiye, is separated from Anatolia by the Sea of Marmara, the Bosphorus, and the Dardanelles.

Türkiye is a member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the United Nations (UN), an old member of NATO, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank (WB), and a founding member of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC), and the Group of Twenty (G20).

Istanbul, which lies on two continents—Europe and Asia, is the country's largest city, while Ankara is the capital city.

Türkiye is bordered to the northwest by Greece and Bulgaria; to the north by the Black Sea; to the northeast by Georgia; to the east by Armenia, Azerbaijan (the exclave of Nakhchivan) and Iran; to the southeast by Iraq; to the south by Syria and the Mediterranean Sea, and to the west by the Aegean

Sea.

Türkiye has a strategic location, being a bridge between Europe and Asia. Asian Türkiye (made up largely of Anatolia), which includes 97% of the country, is separated from European Türkiye by the Bosphorus, the Sea of Marmara, and the Dardanelles (which together form a water link between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean). European Türkiye (East Thrace or Rumelia in the Balkan Peninsula) accounts for 3% of the country's area.

The territory of Türkiye is more than 1,600 km long and 800 km wide, with a roughly rectangular shape. Its geographic location is at 35°-43° N latitude, and 25-45° E longitude. Türkiye's area makes it the world's 37th largest country. It is encircled by seas on three sides: the Aegean Sea to the west, the Black Sea to the north, and the Mediterranean Sea to the south. It also contains the Sea of Marmara in the northwest.

Türkiye's varied landscapes are the product of complex earth movements that have shaped the region over thousands of years and still manifest themselves in fairly frequent earthquakes and occasional volcanic eruptions. The country was hit by severe

earthquakes in 1999 and 2023.

The coastal areas of Türkiye bordering the Aegean Sea and the Mediterranean have a temperate climate, with hot, dry summers and mild, wet and cold winters.

The coastal areas of Türkiye bordering the Black Sea have an oceanic climate that is warm and humid in summer and cold and wet in winter. The Black Sea coast receives the greatest amount of rainfall. The eastern part of the coast averages 2,500 millimeters annually, which is the highest precipitation in the country.

Turkish is the only official language throughout Türkiye. According to the World Factbook, about 70-75% of the country's population speak the Turkish language, while 18% speak the Kurdish language. Türkiye had used the Ottoman Turkish alphabet during the Ottoman Empire era.

Türkiye is a secular country, with no official state religion. The Turkish Constitution guarantees freedom of belief and religion. Islam is the most practiced religion in Türkiye. Muslims account for 99 percent of the population according to official statistics, and 97 to 98 percent according to other surveys.



# 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](http://www.oic-oci.org)**



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 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



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