

OIC

Issued by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

January - April 2025

Issue 57

Journal



A Coordination Mechanism between the OIC, the Arab League, and the African Union in Support of Palestine

No to Displacement





50th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers
Yaoundé – Republic of Cameroon
August 29-30, 2024

Theme: (Developing intra-OIC transportation and communication infrastructure: key instrument for combating poverty and insecurity)

Yaoundé is the capital of the Republic of Cameroon, and contains many manufacturing and processing industries, such as wood factories and printing presses, and is also a market for one of the richest agricultural regions in the country.



OUR MESSAGE

Donors' Conference to Support Displaced People in the Sahel and Lake Chad Region

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) serves as a meeting point for its Member States. It is a platform where the values of generosity, cooperation, and solidarity find their concrete expression. This was brilliantly demonstrated through the Donors' Conference to Support Displaced People and Refugees in the Sahel and Lake Chad Region, graciously hosted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and held on October 26, 2024, at the headquarters of the OIC General Secretariat in Jeddah. The Conference, convened in alignment with Resolution ICHAD-4/49 issued by the 49th session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers, served as a beacon for generous giving, solidarity, and fraternity.

The Donors' Conference was the fruit of a joint and coordinated effort between the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSRelief), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

I cannot miss this opportunity to highlight the remarkable and valuable initiative of the Government of Saudi Arabia in graciously hosting this Conference as well as in generously contributing, through its institutions, to the relentless efforts to mobilize the requisite resources to meet the needs of refugees and displaced persons in the countries of the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin region. Given its context and integrated dimensions, this initiative not only reinforces a deep-rooted tradition of support for African countries members of the OIC and friends of Saudi Arabia, but also demonstrates the Kingdom's commitment to the values of solidarity, which have always served as a basis for its noble behavior and valuable action within the OIC.

The Donors' Conference, hosted by the OIC General Secretariat, is a true reflection of effective synergy between the OIC and its external partners who were mobilized to respond collectively to the pressing challenges linked to the severe displacement and refugee crisis in a region heavily impacted by insecurity, climate change, and various forms of instability.

As is well known, the Islamic world is one of the regions most afflicted by natural disasters, humanitarian crises, and wars. Containing these crises and disasters is at the same time a duty and a burden that cannot be met without cooperation and concerted efforts among OIC Member States. The Donors' Conference was truly a milestone event in terms of provision of support and assistance.

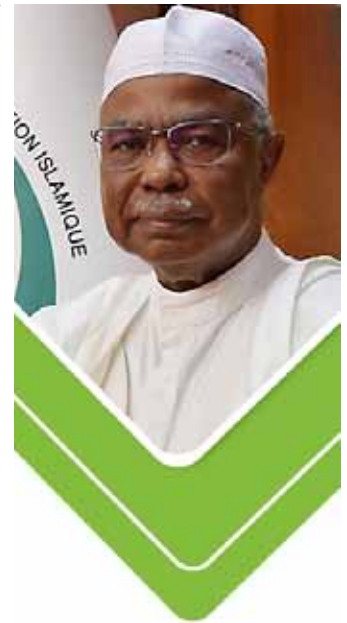
The Conference sought to achieve several goals, including raising awareness about the refugee and displacement crisis in the region in order to come out with adequate response strategies, as well as forging strong partnerships and enhancing network-building to develop long-term solutions to displacement, food insecurity, and other crises. Other goals of the Conference included intensifying diplomatic efforts with a view to preventing further crises in the region and promoting effective responses to meet long-term objectives, in addition to mobilizing resources for immediate humanitarian response to support over 11 million persons suffering the consequences of the displacement and refugee crisis in the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin region.

The Conference was designed to achieve a host of goals, including increasing awareness about the displacement and refugee crisis in the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin region, and mobilizing financial resources for immediate humanitarian response to this crisis and to any future challenges that might arise in this important part of the African Continent.

With the unparalleled success of the Donors' Conference which attracted a wide participation, I would like to reiterate my sincere thanks and deep gratitude to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, and to HRH Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, Crown Prince, and Prime Minister. At the same time, I wish to highly commend the sincere efforts of Saudi Arabia, embodied through the customary warm reception and generous hospitality extended to all participants during their stay in the Kingdom, as well as through the great success and the outstanding results of the Conference, which won the praise of all participants.

No doubt, Saudi Arabia's generous donation in support of displaced people and refugees in the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin countries is perfectly aligned with its longstanding and unswerving policy, as well as with its historical positions in strengthening inter-Islamic solidarity, promoting joint Islamic action, and supporting the peoples of OIC Member States affected by crises and humanitarian disasters.

We are all proud that the OIC, in cooperation with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Nations agencies and institutions, has succeeded in extending a helping hand to seven African Member States of the OIC and millions of displaced persons and refugees who will benefit from the fruitful outcomes of this successful flagship event.



Hissein Brahim Taha

Secretary-General of the
Organization of Islamic
Cooperation

The Islamic world is one of the regions most afflicted by natural disasters, humanitarian crises, and wars. Containing these crises and disasters is at the same time a duty and a burden

OIC Journal

Issued by

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation

Chief Editor & General Supervisor
Dr. Abdelhamid Salhi

Editor
Bashir Sa'ad Abdullahi

Layout & Design
Mohamed Abdelqader Qalaba

Advisory Board
Amb. Tareg Bakheet
Hassan Basri Arsalan

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

For comments, enquiries
E-mail: 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

oic@un.int
**OIC Permanent Observer
to the UN Geneva Office**

ICC-20, Route Pre-Bois - Case Postal 1818
CH 1215, Geneve, Suisse
www.oic-un.org
oic@oic-un.org

The views expressed by the writers/authors of the articles published in the OIC Journal do not necessarily represent the views of the OIC, but are the personal views of the authors themselves. However, the OIC reserves the right/discretion to amend, revise, edit, delete or scrutinize any part or portion of the text as and wherever deemed necessary.

OIC Organs

Standing Committees:

Al-Quds Committee

Standing Committee for Information And Cultural Affairs (COMIAC), Dakar (<https://comiac.gouv.sn/>)

Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation (COMCEC), Istanbul (<https://www.comcec.org/>)

Standing Committee For Scientific And Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH), Islamabad (<https://comstech.org/>)

Subsidiary Organs:

The Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC), Ankara (<https://www.sesric.org/>)

Research Centre For Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA), Istanbul (<https://www.ircica.org/>)

Islamic University of Technology, Dhaka (<https://www.iutoic-dhaka.edu/>)

The Islamic Centre for Development of Trade, Casablanca (<https://icdt-cidc.org/>)

The International Islamic Fiqh Academy, Jeddah (<https://iifa-aifi.org/en>)

Islamic Solidarity Fund, Jeddah (<https://isf-fsi.org>)

Islamic Civil Aviation Council, Tunis

Specialized Institutions:

Islamic Development Bank, Jeddah (<https://www.isdb.org/>)

The Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Rabat (<https://icesco.org/en/>)

The Union OIC News Agencies, Jeddah (<https://una-oic.org/en/>)

OIC States Broadcasting Union, Jeddah (<https://osbu-oic.org/>)

The Islamic Committee of the International Crescent, Benghazi (<https://icic-oic.org/en/index.htm>)

Islamic Organization for Food Security, Astana (<https://www.iofs.org.kz/>)

Labour Center of the OIC, Baku

Organization of Islamic Cooperation Standing Committee on Scientific, Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH Secretariat) Islamabad (<https://comstech.org/>)

Women Development Organization, Cairo (<https://www.wdo-odf.org/en/>)

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation Center for Cooperation and Coordination between Police Agencies, Istanbul

Affiliated Institutions:

Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry & Agriculture, Karachi (<https://www.iccia.com/>)

Organization of Islamic Capitals and Cities, Makkah (<https://www.oicc.org/en/>)

Islamic Solidarity Sports Federation, Riyadh (<https://issf.sa/en/>)

Organization of the Islamic Ship-owners Association, Jeddah

World Federation of Arabo-Islamic International Schools, Cairo (<https://facebook.com/wfaiis.oic.schools>)

Islamic Cooperation Youth Forum, Istanbul (<https://www.icyforum.org/>)

International Union of Muslim Scouts, Jeddah (<https://msihs.org>)

Islamic World Academy of Sciences, Amman (<https://www.iasworld.org/>)

The Federation of Consultants from Islamic Countries, Istanbul (<https://www.thefcic.org/home>)

General Council For Islamic Banks And Financial Institutions, Manama (<https://www.cibafi.org/Home>)

Federation of Contractors from Islamic Countries, Riyadh

OIC Computer Emergency Response Team, Cyberjaya, Malaysia (<https://www.oic-cert.org/en/index.html>)

Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries, Istanbul (<https://www.smiic.org/en>)

Real Estate Union in Islamic States, Djibouti

OIC Broadcasting Regulatory Authorities Forum, Ankara (<https://www.oic-ibraf.org/>)

International Islamic University Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur (<https://www.iiu.edu.my/v2/>)

Association of Tax Authorities of Islamic Countries, Khartoum Global Forum for Moderation, Amman (<https://wasatyea.net/en>)

OIC Media Forum, Turkiye King Faisal University, Chad, Ndjamena (<https://urft.net/>)

The Islamic Halal Bodies Accreditation Forum, Saudi Arabia

Islamic Universities:

Islamic University in Niger, Niamey (<https://universite-say.com/>)

Islamic University in Uganda, Mbale (<https://www.iuiu.ac.ug/>)

Independent Organs:

Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC), Jeddah (<https://www.oic-iphrc.org/>)



CONTENTS

Palestine File

- 4 Riyadh Summit Stresses the Necessity of Ending the Israeli Aggression on Palestine and Lebanon
- 6 A Unified Arab-Islamic Stance Rejecting the Displacement of Palestinians
- 8 A Coordination Mechanism between OIC, Arab League and African Union in support of Palestine
- 10 OIC Secretary-General Warns against Attempts to Undermine UNRWA

OIC Observatory

- 12 Israel Pursues a Deliberate Policy to Turn Gaza into a Hell, Unfit for Human Life
- 13 Collective Punishment: Israel has Subjected Gaza to Destruction, Starvation, and Displacement

In-Focus

- 18 OIC holds Donors' Conference to Support Displaced Persons and Refugees in the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin

OIC News

- 26 UN General Assembly Adopts Resolution on Cooperation with OIC

Afghanistan

- 24 Special Envoy of OIC Secretary-General for Afghanistan holds consultations in Pakistan

Elections

- 28 OIC Dispatches Election Observers to 6 Member States

Cultural Affairs

- 30 OIC Participates in two Conferences on Arabic Language in Dubai and N'Djamena

Social Affairs

- 35 OIC and US Department of State Secretary's Office for Global Women's Issues sign MoU

Economic Affairs

- 40 OIC Secretary-General at 40th COMCEC Ministerial Session Calls for Fostering Intra-OIC Agricultural Cooperation

Organs

- 54 Coordination Meeting of OIC Islamic Universities in Kuala Lumpur in collaboration with OIC



11 OIC Denounces Israel's Occupation of Syrian Territories



14 360,000 Students in Gaza without Education



20 A glow stick sows terror among Palestinians in forced displacement from Jabalia



29 10th edition of the Holy Sites Journey Program for Arab and Islamic Youth



33 Sacred Heritage in Uzbekistan



Riyadh Summit Calls for an End to Israeli Aggression



The Extraordinary Joint Arab and Islamic Summit was convened on November 11, 2024, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, under the chairmanship of HRH Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia. The Summit brought together the Leaders, Heads of Government, and Heads of Delegation of Member States of both the OIC and the League of Arab States.

Addressing the Summit, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, expressed sincere thanks and gratitude to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, and to HRH Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Crown Prince and Prime Minister, for the gracious invitation to convene this extraordinary summit and for generously hosting it. He indicated that the Summit is a reaffirmation of commitment and support for the Cause of Palestine and Al-Quds Al-Sharif.

The Secretary-General noted that the Summit is being held amid the ongoing brutal crimes of military aggression and genocide perpetrated by the Israeli occupation in Palestine and Lebanon, the targeting of the very existence and role of UNRWA and the Palestinian refugee issue, as well as the attempts to displace the Palestinian people and drag the entire region into a full-scale war, all in blatant violation of international law and relevant UN resolutions. He underlined the

need for the enforcement of Security Council Resolution 2735 regarding the ceasefire and the adequate and sustainable delivery of humanitarian aid to all parts of Gaza, in addition to the withdrawal of the Israeli occupation forces, and enabling the Palestinian government to assume its responsibilities in the Gaza Strip.

The Secretary-General commended the efforts of the Joint Arab-Islamic Ministerial Committee on the Palestinian Cause, underlining the necessity for it to pursue its endeavors in the international arena in order to halt the ongoing aggression, occupation, and unlawful Israeli settlements. He emphasized the importance of providing international protection for the Palestinian people, and expanding global recognition of the State of Palestine and its right for full UN membership. Additionally, he advocated for the implementation of the two-state solution, which would realize the establishment of an independent State of Palestine on the basis of the 1967 borders, with East Al-Quds as its capital, in line with the relevant UN resolutions, particularly the recent UNGA Resolution concerning the ICJ's advisory opinion, as well as the Arab Peace Initiative.

The Secretary-General also highlighted the need of preserving Lebanon's unity, security, and stability as well as the sovereignty of the Lebanese State over its internationally recog-

nized territories and borders. He called for imposing an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire and for promoting an enduring stability in Lebanon through the full enforcement of the Security Council resolutions, including Resolution 1701.

On November 10, 2024, the OIC Secretary-General had participated in the Ministerial Meeting preparatory for the Summit, held in the Saudi capital, Riyadh, and chaired by H.H. Prince Faisal bin Farhan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia.

In his address to the meeting, the Secretary-General stressed the importance of holding this Summit in view of the ongoing, escalating, and grave challenges and tragedies in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, especially the Gaza Strip, as well as in the Lebanese territories, as a result of the continued crimes of aggression, blockade, settlement, destruction, and displacement perpetrated by the Israeli occupation, all in flagrant violation of international law and UN resolutions, and in contempt for human values and principles.

The Secretary-General also warned of the grave consequences of the Israeli occupation's measures against UNRWA, emphasizing the vital role of UNRWA as a UN agency providing essential services to Palestinian refugees, and as a witness to the international community's permanent commitment and responsibility towards their cause, and a pillar of regional peace and stability.



OIC Leaders Warn against the Expansion of the Israeli Aggression

The Extraordinary Joint Arab and Islamic Summit, held on November 11, 2024, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, affirmed the resolutions adopted by the First Extraordinary Joint Summit convened in November 2023. It renewed its determination to counter the brutal Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip and Lebanon, and to work towards ending its disastrous humanitarian repercussions on defenseless civilians, including children, women, and elderly people.

The Summit warned, in its resolution, against the danger of the escalation in the region and its regional and international repercussions. It also warned against the expansion of the aggression on the Gaza Strip, which has extended to Lebanon, as well as against the violation of the sovereignty of Iraq, Syria, and Iran, amid the lack of decisive measures by the United Nations and the inaction of international legitimacy.

The Summit insisted on the implementation of all relevant resolutions issued by the UN General Assembly, including Resolution No. A/RES/ES-10/22 on the protection of civilians and adherence to legal and humanitarian obligations, dated December 10, 2023, and the resolutions issued by the Security Council.

It also stressed the need for the Security Council to adopt a binding resolution, under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, to compel Israel, the occupying power, to observe a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, to allow the entry of immediate and sufficient humanitarian aid to all areas of the Strip, and to implement the Security Council resolutions which call for taking urgent steps to immediately allow delivery of humanitarian aid, the resolutions that affirm the right of the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination and national independence and the right of refugees to return, and the resolutions that affirm the permanent responsibility of the United Nations for the Palestinian issue until it is resolved in all its aspects. It also called on the Security Council to respond to the international consensus expressed in the UNGA Resolution issued in May 2024 that the State of Palestine is qualified for full membership in the United Nations.

The Resolution adopted by the Summit expressed support for the valuable and tireless efforts made by Egypt and Qatar, jointly with the United States of America, to achieve an

immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza and the release of hostages and prisoners. It held Israel responsible for the failure of these efforts as a result of its reneging on the agreements reached by the negotiators. The Resolution called on the international community to fully implement the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice, dated July 19, 2024, towards ending the Israeli occupation, removing its effects, and paying compensation for its damages, as soon as possible. It condemned the crime of enforced disappearance perpetrated by the Israeli occupation forces as part of its aggression against thousands of Palestinian citizens in the Gaza Strip and throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including children, women, and elderly people, in addition to the abuse, repression, torture and degrading treatment to which they are subjected. It called on the Member States of the United Nations to work at all levels for disclosing the fate of the kidnapped, releasing them immediately, and ensuring their protection, and demanded an independent and transparent investigation into these crimes, including the crime of the execution of some of the kidnapped.

Arab-Islamic Stance Rejecting the Displacement of Palestinians



The Extraordinary Joint Arab and Islamic Summit, held on November 11, 2024, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, strongly condemned the Israeli aggression against Lebanon and the violation of its sovereignty and territorial integrity, and called for an immediate cease-fire and for the full implementation of UNSC Resolution No. 1701 (2006). It rejected, in its Resolution, the displacement of Palestinian citizens inside or outside their land, considering it as a war crime and a flagrant violation of international law, which we will collectively stand against.

The Summit condemned the policy of collective punishment perpetrated by Israel and the use of siege and starvation as a weapon against civilians in the Gaza Strip. It called on the international community to take immediate practical steps to end the humanitarian catastrophe caused by the aggression, including forcing Israel to completely withdraw from the Gaza Strip, open all crossings between it and the Strip, and lift all restrictions and obstacles to the safe, rapid and unconditional delivery of humanitarian aid to the Strip, in implementation of its obligations as the occupying power.

The Summit called for the immediate with-

drawal of the Israeli occupation forces from the Rafah crossing and the Philadelphi Corridor, for the Palestinian National Authority's return to manage the Rafah crossing, as well as for resuming implementation of the 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access, in a manner that allows the regular work of relief organizations and the resumption of the flow of aid in a safe and effective manner. It also insisted on the need to join efforts to implement the outcomes of the Emergency Humanitarian Response Conference in Gaza, hosted by Jordan and organized jointly with Egypt and the United Nations on June 11, 2024, as well as to mobilize the necessary support for the humanitarian conference that Cairo would host on December 2, 2024. The Summit called on the international community to take effective action to compel Israel to comply with international law. It denounced the double standards in the application of international law, international humanitarian law, and the UN Charter, which, it warned, could seriously undermine the credibility of the States that protect Israel. It welcomed Resolution A/RES/ES-10/24 issued by the General Assembly on September 18, 2024, which adopted the outcomes of the

International Court of Justice's advisory opinion on the illegality of the Israeli occupation. The Summit called on all States of the world and their legislative bodies, as well as on all international institutions and organizations, to abide by the resolutions of international legitimacy regarding the city of Al-Quds and its legal and historical status, as an integral part of the Palestinian territory occupied in 1967. It strongly condemned the aggressive Israeli measures targeting the Islamic and Christian holy sites in the city of Al-Quds, and seeking to alter its Arab, Islamic, and Christian identity, and called on the international community to pressure Israel to stop them. It warned against the continuing attacks on the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Al-Sharif, including undermining freedom of worship in the Mosque and preventing worshippers from accessing it, in addition to the desecration, storming, profanation, and vandalizing of the Mosque by groups of Israeli settlers, and the attempts aimed at changing the legal and historical status quo in the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque and imposing the temporal and spatial division.



Islamic World Condemns Banning UNRWA from Operating in Palestine

The Extraordinary Joint Arab and Islamic Summit, held on November 11, 2024, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, urged all countries to ban the export of weapons and ammunition to Israel, as well as to join the initiative proposed by Türkiye and the Core Group consisting of 18 States, which was signed by 52 countries, the OIC and the League of Arab States. It also called for sending a joint letter to the UN Security Council, the President of the UN General Assembly, and the UN Secretary-General, in order to stop providing arms to Israel, and urged all countries to sign it.

The Summit condemned the Israeli Knesset's persistence in adopting and approving racist and illegitimate laws, including the so-called law on revoking the immunities and privileges granted to UNRWA employees, as well as the decision to prevent the Agency from operating in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and to sever relations with it. It also condemned the decision against the establishment of a Palestinian State, and stressed that these laws and decisions are null, void, and illegitimate. It called on the Member States of the United Nations to impose sanctions on Israel, the occupying power, in order to compel it to comply with international law and international legitimacy resolutions, and urged all States to provide effective political and financial support to UNRWA.

Through its Resolution, the Summit urged the International Criminal Court (ICC) to expeditiously issue arrest warrants against Israeli civilian and military officials for committing crimes - falling within the ICC jurisdiction - against the Palestinian people. It called on the Security Council and the international community to take the necessary actions, including imposing sanctions, in order to stop the illegal Israeli measures in the occupied West Bank that undermine the two-state solution and compromise all chances of achieving a just and comprehensive peace in the region, as well as to criminalize such colonial policies and condemn the policies pursued by the occupying power to annex any part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory by force with the aim of expanding illegal settler colonialism.

The Summit called for boycotting the products of Israeli settlements on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and the companies operating therein and included in the database issued by the Human Rights Council on June 30, 2023, as well as for drawing up Lists of Shame that include the names of those companies, considering that they feed the occupation and seek to perpetuate it. It also called on all States of the world, including Member States, to prevent settlers present in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Al-Quds, from entering them for any

purpose whatsoever, and establish special mechanisms and measures to examine identification documents to verify their places of residence, in cooperation with the State of Palestine, considering that they are involved in terrorist hostilities against the Palestinian people, their properties and their lands.

The Summit called on the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States and the General Secretariat of the OIC, in cooperation with the State of Palestine, to prepare a list of the names of these groups and circulate it to Member States. It also called on key international parties to launch a plan with specific steps and timeline, under international sponsorship, to end the occupation and establish an independent, sovereign Palestinian State on the lines of June 4, 1967, with occupied Al-Quds as its capital, based on the two-state solution, and in accordance with the approved references and the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative. It stressed that a just and comprehensive peace in the region that guarantees security and stability for all its countries cannot be achieved without ending the Israeli occupation of all the occupied Arab territories up to the June 4, 1967 line, in accordance with the relevant UN resolutions and the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative with all its components.

Coordination between OIC, Arab League, and AU in Support of Palestine



On the sidelines of the Extraordinary Joint Arab and Islamic Summit, held on November 11, 2024, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, Secretary-General of the OIC, H.E. Mr. Ahmed Aboul Gheit, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, and H.E. Amb. Nader Fath Al-Alim, representing the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, signed the joint coordination mechanism between the three organizations on supporting the Palestinian Cause. The signing event was held under the patronage of H.H. Prince Faisal bin Farhan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and in the presence of a number of Member States' Foreign Ministers.

This step reflects a joint commitment to strengthening cooperation, coordination, and partnership among the three organizations, based on their constituent documents and their resolutions regarding Palestine, as well as their shared commitment to the values of justice, peace, and the countering of colonialism, oppression, and racial discrimination.

This mechanism is designed to enhance joint efforts at the political, legal, humanitarian, media, and cultural levels to support and defend the rights of the Palestinian people who are being subjected to brutal aggres-

sion, genocide, displacement, and systematic destruction by the Israeli occupation forces.

Within this joint mechanism, the three organizations work to coordinate their stances and moves in international fora, facilitate regular exchange of views, and organize joint events, meetings, and workshops in support of Palestine.

The first meeting of the joint coordination mechanism was held with the participation of delegations headed by Amb. Samir Bakr, Assistant Secretary-General for Palestine and Al-Quds Affairs at the OIC, Amb. Said Abu Ali, Assistant Secretary-General for Palestine and the Occupied Arab Territories at the League of Arab States, and Amb. Nader Fath Al-Alim, Head of the Permanent Mission of the African Union to the League of Arab States.

The meeting discussed the draft action plan for the implementation of the activities of the tripartite mechanism in the current year, covering the political, economic, humanitarian, cultural, and media fields. The activities and events included in this annual program were approved across various areas, with the three organizations emphasizing the importance of mobilizing efforts and coordinating Arab, Islamic, and African positions on the global scene regarding the Palestin-

ian Cause. The program also involves carrying out several joint activities and events to strengthen support and solidarity with Palestine and its people's just struggle in all fora, at both official and popular levels, in the Member States of the three organizations.

The Resolution adopted by the Arab and Islamic Extraordinary Summit called for providing all forms of political and diplomatic support and international protection to the Palestinian people and to the State of Palestine, as well as for achieving Palestinian national unity. It called for the State of Palestine's effective assumption of its responsibilities over all the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including the Gaza Strip, and unifying it with the West Bank, including the city of Al-Quds. It also called for supporting the State of Palestine economically by enhancing its efforts in terms of humanitarian relief, economic recovery, and reconstruction of Gaza. It stressed the importance of continuing to support the budget of the State of Palestine and activating a transparent financial safety net in accordance with agreed-upon mechanisms. It demanded that the international community compel the Israeli occupation authority to release, immediately and in full, the withheld Palestinian tax revenues.

Ministerial Conference on Humanitarian Assistance to Gaza



The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, took part in Cairo in the Ministerial Conference on Humanitarian Assistance to the Gaza Strip, held under the patronage of H.E. President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi. The Conference was organized by Egypt on December 2, 2024, in collaboration with the United Nations under the title: “A Year after the Humanitarian Disaster in Gaza: Urgent Needs and Permanent Solutions.”

Addressing the Conference, the OIC Secretary-General highlighted the importance of strengthening the international community’s solidarity and support in the face of the mounting humanitarian challenges in the Gaza Strip. He renewed the OIC’s insistence on the necessity of achieving an immediate,

permanent, and comprehensive ceasefire in Gaza, and putting an end to all the Israeli violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif.

The Secretary-General commended the humanitarian assistance provided by States and organizations to the Palestinian people. He stressed the determination of the OIC and its institutions to remain an effective partner in all efforts aimed at alleviating the humanitarian suffering of the Palestinian people and strengthening their steadfastness. He underlined the need for the international community to act toward putting an end to the ongoing Israeli aggression, ending settlements and the occupation of the Palestinian land, and establishing an independent Palestinian State on the borders

of June 4, 1967, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

On another note, the OIC welcomed the UN General Assembly’s adoption, by an overwhelming majority, of a resolution that affirms the Palestinian people’s right to self-determination, considering this a global consensus rejecting the Israeli illegal colonial occupation of the Palestinian territory. The OIC reiterated its call on all countries that have not yet recognized the State of Palestine to do so and to support its full membership in the United Nations, as well as to take the necessary steps to implement the General Assembly’s resolution regarding the International Court of Justice’s advisory opinion on the illegality of the Israeli occupation and the need to put an end to it.

Global Coalition for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution

Ambassador Samir Bakr, Assistant Secretary-General for Palestine and Al-Quds Affairs, headed a delegation from the OIC General Secretariat to the Second Meeting of the “Global Coalition for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution”, held at the level of Senior Officials in Brussels, Belgium, on November 28, 2024.

The OIC’s participation in this meeting confirms its strong commitment to supporting international efforts to end the Israeli occupation, aggression, and illegal settlement in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Amb. Samir Bakr stressed the OIC’s full sup-

port for international efforts aimed at finding a permanent, just, and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian Cause, based on the rules of international law, the relevant resolutions of international legitimacy, and the Arab Peace Initiative. He underlined the importance of this Coalition in strengthening cooperation and joint action among key international parties to implement their obligations and take practical measures that contribute to stopping the aggression on Gaza, delivering humanitarian aid, and working to implement the two-state solution.

Previously, the OIC General Secretariat had participated in the First Meeting of the “Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution”, held at the level of Senior Officials on October 30-31, 2024 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, with the participation of delegations from 94 countries and international organizations.

The OIC was represented in this meeting by Amb. Samir Bakr who led the delegation of the General Secretariat, as an affirmation of the OIC’s support for this Global Alliance.

Secretary-General Warns against Attempts to Undermine UNRWA

ISRAELI CAMPAIGN AGAINST UNRWA

01 MEDIA MISINFORMATION

The Israeli occupation forces launched a misleading media campaign against the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), bombed its schools and warehouses in the Gaza Strip, demolished its office in Tulkarm, confiscated its land in occupied Jerusalem, and lifted its immunity, without providing a single piece of evidence for its allegations.



03 COLLECTIVE PUNISHMENT

Israel, the occupying power, has deliberately punished UNRWA inside Palestine with the same collective punishment it imposes on civilians in the Gaza Strip, issuing its collective judgment against UNRWA in a manner that it commits war crimes against civilians in Gaza.



02 UNILATERAL POLICY

Israel, the occupying power, has been working through a high-handed, unilateral and hasty policy to waste the opportunity for the international community to respond to its allegations, in order to tighten the noose on the Palestinians, kill them and starve them in the Gaza Strip.



04 STRIKE THE PALESTINIAN PRESENCE

Israel, the occupying power, seeks to cancel the right of return of Palestinian refugees by attempting to undermine UNRWA's work and ignoring the agency's General Assembly mandate towards Palestinian refugees.



**OIC MEDIA OBSERVATORY ON ISRAELI
CRIMES AGAINST PALESTINIANS**




The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, warned against the gravity of attempts by Israel, the occupying power, to end the presence and role of UNRWA, considering this a violation of its obligations under the United Nations Charter and relevant UN resolutions. This was expressed in letters sent by the OIC Secretary-General to the Foreign Ministers of the Permanent Members of the UN Security Council, to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, as well as to the current Presidents of the Security Council and the General Assembly. In these letters, he underlined the crucial and vital role undertaken by UNRWA in providing essential services to Palestinian refugees in the West Bank, including East Al-Quds, and especially in the Gaza Strip, given the tragic circumstances they are enduring. He called for putting pressure on Israel, the occupying power, to stop its illegal measures against UNRWA.

In the same context, the OIC condemned in the strongest terms the vote by the Knesset of Israel, the occupying power, in favor of an invalid bill that bans UNRWA from oper-

ating in occupied East Al-Quds and revokes the privileges and immunities granted to it under the resolutions of the UN General Assembly. It considered this vote another demonstration of Israel's attempts to liquidate the Cause of Palestinian refugees and undermine their inherent right to return, in flagrant violation of international law, the Charter of the United Nations, and the relevant UN resolutions.

The OIC warned against the repercussions of these Israeli measures on the role of UNRWA in providing vital services to Palestinian refugees, stressing that the Israeli occupation's continued targeting of the Agency's facilities, employees, and thousands of displaced persons in its schools will not change the legal status of UNRWA which is entrusted with an international mandate pursuant to the resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly.

The OIC called on the international community, especially the UN Security Council, to assume its responsibilities towards protecting UNRWA and its vital role in providing essential services to millions of Palestinian

refugees and ensuring their rights, until a just and agreed-upon solution is reached in line with the relevant UN resolutions.

On the other hand, the OIC welcomed the UN General Assembly's resolution on the "request for an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice on the obligations of Israel in relation to the presence and activities of the United Nations, other international organizations, and third States." It also commended the efforts of the Kingdom of Norway and all other States that co-sponsored and supported the draft resolution.

The OIC stressed that all the schemes and machinations of the Israeli occupation, including legislations that affect the presence, operations, and immunities of the United Nations and its entities and bodies, including UNRWA, as well as other international organizations and Third States in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Al-Quds, constitute a violation of the UN Charter and relevant UN resolutions, and could lead to depriving the Palestinian people of humanitarian assistance and exacerbating the humanitarian crisis they are enduring.



OIC Denounces Israel's Occupation of Syrian Territories

The OIC General Secretariat condemned the ongoing, escalating, and brutal Israeli military aggression on Syrian territories, including the military targeting of infrastructure, the expansion of unlawful occupation in the buffer zone of the Golan Heights, as well as the occupation of Mount Hermon and parts of the city of Quneitra. It considered these acts to be a grave violation of international law and relevant UN resolutions, and stressed the need to respect the unity, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic, and to preserve its security and stability.

The General Secretariat affirmed its support for the Syrian people and respect for their political choices. It urged all political entities to demonstrate a sense of responsibility, to prioritize the supreme interests of the Syrian people and the preservation of human lives and national capacities, and to pursue the political transition process in a peaceful and secure way; thereby enabling Syria to restore its institutional and territorial integrity, and regain its role and standing among the countries of the world.

Amid these circumstances, the residents of the Quneitra Governorate in Syria launched an urgent appeal to prevent forced displacement

and violations in Quneitra by the Israeli occupation authorities. They demanded protection from the escalating crimes perpetrated by the Israeli occupation forces, which amount to plain violations of human rights and international law.

The occupation authorities had taken control of several villages and towns in Quneitra, including Suwayseh and Al-Duwaya, in blatant violation of UN resolutions that affirm Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity. This escalation reached a critical point when peaceful protests against the occupation were met with live ammunition, resulting in serious injuries to four Syrian civilians from the governorate, including children, who were transferred to Quneitra Hospital. The injured were: Abdel Rahman Khaled Al-Nakal, who was shot in both legs; Ahmad Younis Shetiwi, 13 years old, who was shot in the back and chest; Ala'a Jasem Al-Awad, who was shot in the right ankle; and Al-Mu'tasim Billah Adel Al-Ali, who was shot in the right side.

The residents of Quneitra stressed that these crimes violate international instruments, including the Geneva Conventions, which criminalize the targeting of civilians and forced displacement. They urged the

international community to take immediate action to stop these ongoing violations, including forming an international investigation committee, and dispatching a mission to Quneitra to investigate the violations committed by the Israeli occupation forces. They also demanded an immediate international condemnation by issuing a statement that clearly and directly condemns the Israeli practices in Quneitra, including a call for halting the aggression. They called for supporting humanitarian efforts and providing urgent humanitarian aid to the affected populations of Quneitra, including food, shelter, and essential medical supplies, in addition to enforcing international resolutions and ensuring that Israel, the occupying power, complies with UN resolutions, particularly those affirming Syria's sovereignty and demanding the occupying forces' withdrawal from Syrian territories.

The residents of Quneitra said that they consider the international community as their last hope in the face of these violations, emphasizing their reliance on the international community's efforts to establish justice and defend the rights of oppressed peoples.



Israel Pursues a Deliberate Policy to Turn Gaza into a Hell, Unfit for Human Life

Since October 7, 2023, and as of the writing of the present report at the end of December 2024, the Israeli occupation forces followed a policy of escalation aimed at turning the Gaza Strip into a hell, unfit for human habitation. It destroyed infrastructures and service facilities, prevented the entry of aid, bombed bakeries, and put hospitals out of service and evacuated them, among other war crimes. As a result, nearly two million people, most of whom were displaced persons, were crammed in an extremely narrow and overcrowded area, turning it into an hostile place that pushes its residents into voluntary migration.

The OIC Media Observatory on Israel's Crimes against Palestinians recorded 4,046 martyrs during 3 3-month period, in addition to 16,676 injuries. The Israeli occupation forces bombed 22 schools sheltering displaced people in Gaza, causing 326 massacres over the last three months. They also killed 203 journalists during the period of their aggression on Gaza.

The total number of crimes and violations perpetrated by the Israeli forces in the Pal-

estinian Territory over the past 90 days reached 27,933.

During this same period, the Kamal Adwan Hospital in northern Gaza suffered a series of Israeli crimes, culminating in orders from the occupation forces to evacuate the hospital after they cut the electricity supply, placed explosive-laden robots nearby, and demolished residential buildings in the surrounding area. In early December 2024, the hospital was also targeted with shells and gunfire. Al-Awda Hospital was hit as well.

The Observatory also recorded multiple bombings and invasions of Kamal Adwan Hospital, with the occupation forces forcing its medical staff, including Indonesian doctors, to leave. The director of the hospital, Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya, was arrested. The occupation forces also besieged the Indonesian Hospital and destroyed its outer wall, while Al-Awda Hospital in Jabalia camp was repeatedly shelled. All hospitals in northern Gaza, including those in Jabalia, Beit Lahiya, and Beit Hanoun, were consequently put out of service, in addition to the repeated bombing of Al-Ma'amadani Hospital. The

occupation army also targeted the area around Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir al-Balah.

These attacks occurred while 12,000 wounded people were in urgent need of travel for treatment, 10,000 cancer patients were facing the risk of death, and 3,000 people with chronic illnesses were deprived of treatment. Additionally, over one and a half million people suffered from infectious diseases due to displacement conditions.

The Observatory also recorded the disastrous situation of the health system in Gaza which has been suffering under a year-long aggression. During this period, 20 hospitals (both private and governmental), out of 35, were totally out of service, while the remaining 15 hospitals operated only partially. Furthermore, 80 healthcare centers, out of 90, were shut down, and 130 ambulances were destroyed. 1,151 Palestinians were martyred, and 310 others working in the health sector were arrested. These figures need continuous updates as crimes continue to increase in the following periods.



Collective Punishment:

Israel has Subjected Gaza to Destruction, Starvation, and Displacement

The three-month period from October to December 2024 saw a clear process of forced displacement carried out by Israeli occupation forces, specifically targeting the remaining residents of northern Gaza, especially the Jabalia Camp. The OIC Observatory documented the isolation of 400,000 Palestinians living in northern Gaza, with the occupation forces preventing humanitarian aid from reaching them and reintroducing the Israeli policy of starvation. The Israeli forces had also issued dozens of orders aimed at forcibly displacing Palestinians, particularly in northern Gaza.

The Israeli occupation also prohibited civil defense teams from operating in northern Gaza, where it became evident that the Israeli measures were designed to forcibly displace its population to areas in central Gaza. A UNDP report stated that 80,000 homes were destroyed in Gaza, and it would take 80 years to rebuild them, while the economy of Gaza would require 350 years to return to its faltering state before the Israeli aggression.

In addition to direct Israeli air, land, and sea

bombardments, the Israeli soldiers carried out demolitions of residential buildings in northern Gaza that had survived previous bombings.

Israeli occupation soldiers' testimonies of war crimes they perpetrated in Gaza were revealed by the Israeli newspaper Haaretz, documenting their involvement in killing civilians. Hebrew media also reported that the Israeli forces had destroyed over 70% of the buildings in Jabalia Camp.

The targeting of schools was aimed at terrorizing displaced individuals who sought refuge there, pushing for their forced displacement. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Israel, the occupying power, placed 87 percent of Gaza as part of 66 forcible relocation orders covering 150 neighborhoods. The Office also indicated that about 80% of Gaza's territory had been placed under such orders. The city of Beit Lahiya was declared a disaster area.

The Observatory also documented the flooding of displaced persons' tents due to heavy rainfall, with the Civil Defense

unable to provide assistance because of a fuel shortage. Another crisis – severe cold weather – fell upon the Palestinians in Gaza, alongside the many humanitarian disasters they had already been enduring.

The food situation went from bad to worse, reaching the brink of famine due to the Israeli occupation's arbitrary practices and refusal to allow the entry of aid, especially to northern Gaza.

The Observatory noted that the deteriorating food situation in Gaza is the result of several factors caused by the Israeli practices, including the prevention or restriction of humanitarian aid, allowing only limited items to enter, in addition to permitting settlers to destroy shipments en route to the crossings. At times, entry of humanitarian aid would be allowed, only to target the crowds waiting for food. The trucks themselves were targeted after entering the Gaza Strip, in addition to the committees in charge of aid distribution, the "takayas" that distribute ready meals, and the food and goods warehouses. Criminals and thieves were also incited to steal aid shipments.



For the Second Year in a Row: 360,000 Students in Gaza without Education

The OIC Media Observatory on Israel's Crimes against Palestinians recorded a range of crimes of various types, one of the most serious of them being Israel's plans to undermine UNRWA. Israel, the occupying power, has extended its war on UNRWA from the Palestinian Territory to various cities worldwide, by conducting a continued misinformation campaign through paid advertisements in the streets of those cities aimed at tarnishing the Agency's reputation, calling for its dismantling, and accusing it of "terrorism". The Israeli military forces demolished the UNRWA Office in Nur Shams Camp in Tulkarm, and seized the land where the Agency's headquarters was located in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood, with the intention of turning it into a settlement outpost.

The targeting of UNRWA came at a time when the occupation forces exterminated, in only one year, 5,738 Palestinian families in Gaza, an unprecedented crime of genocide. The number of families that were completely exterminated with no one single member left amounted to 902, while 1,364

families were exterminated leaving behind only one surviving member, and 3,472 families were exterminated leaving behind two surviving members.

Meanwhile, the United Nations Satellite Center issued an assessment of the demolished buildings in Gaza, which revealed that two-thirds of all the buildings in the Strip (163,778 buildings) were damaged, totaling about 66%, according to satellite images collected on September 3-6, 2024. UN reports indicated that 52,564 buildings were completely destroyed, 18,913 buildings were severely damaged, 35,591 buildings were possibly damaged, and 56,710 buildings were moderately damaged. The images show that the Gaza Governorate was the most affected by the destruction.

Students in schools and universities in Gaza are deprived of education for the second year in a row. According to the OIC Observatory, 360,000 students in Gaza are unable to attend school due to the military aggression which has destroyed many schools or caused them to be out of service, alongside other reasons including displacement and

the transformation of schools into shelters for the displaced.

Around 88,000 university students are unable to continue their education for the second consecutive year for similar reasons. Over the course of one year, from October 7, 2023, to October 7, 2024, 10,558 students were martyred, including 79 students in the West Bank and the rest in Gaza. Moreover, 667 university students were martyred in Gaza and 35 in the West Bank. The total number of injured students in Gaza amounted to 34,015.

As for the educational staff, the Israeli occupation forces killed 425 Palestinians working in schools and 117 others working in higher education institutions in Gaza. Additionally, 3,700 school and university staff in the Strip were wounded.

The Israeli military aggression on Gaza resulted in the complete destruction of 62 public schools, and significant damage to 124 others. Moreover, 126 public schools and 65 UNRWA schools were bombed.



2,166 Detainees in 3 Months; 135 Homes Demolished, Burned, and Occupied in the West Bank

Between October and December 2024, the Israeli occupation forces continued their crimes against Palestinians in the West Bank and occupied Al-Quds, arresting 2,166 Palestinians in cities, towns, and villages across the West Bank. The highest number of arrests took place in Ramallah, Al-Khalil, and Nablus. The occupation forces also demolished 93 homes, burned 9 homes, and occupied 33 homes, as documented by the OIC Media Observatory on Israel's Crimes against Palestinians.

This same period (October to December) coincided with the olive harvest season, particularly in the villages of Nablus, Ramallah, and Tulkarm, which is of critical importance for the Palestinian economy. During this vital season, Palestinians faced 257 attacks, including preventing farmers from harvesting their crops, cutting down trees, breaking tree branches, blocking roads leading to agricultural lands, burning crops, and stealing harvesting equipment, among other crimes. During this same period, towns and villages in the West Bank witnessed 619 attacks by

Israeli settlers who assaulted Palestinians, killed children and elderly people, stole property, and burned vehicles. They seized land, plowed it and grazed their livestock on it, cut down trees, broke tree branches, and performed Talmudic rituals. Other crimes included blocking roads leading to villages, provocatively roaming in those villages, and throwing stones at Palestinians, all as part of a policy aimed at systematically and daily harassing and harming Palestinians.

In terms of land confiscation, the Israeli forces seized 54.79 dunams of land from the towns of Qatanna and Biddu, located behind the Separation Wall. They also confiscated lands for the expansion of a street from the "Gush Etzion" settlement, and other lands in the Khallet Semaan area to establish a bus station for Israeli settlers. Other land confiscations included 11 dunams from the village of Beit Safafa for building 200 new settler housing units, and 520 dunams of agricultural land for the expansion of the "Negohot" settlement near the village of Fuqeiqs. Additionally, 546.42 dunams of

land were confiscated from the towns and villages of Salfit to expand a settler road.

The Israeli authorities announced a plan to confiscate 8,750 dunams of land from the town of Kafr ad-Dik to expand the "Bedouel" settlement, as well as 64 dunams of land from the village of Umm Tuba in Al-Quds, which would lead to the evacuation of about 30 homes housing 139 Palestinians.

The Israeli forces also confiscated 26,944 dunams of land from the village of Jaba to establish a buffer zone around the "Adam" settlement, as well as lands from the town of Kifl Haris and 8 dunams from the village of Fasayil to expand a new security road linking the "Tomer" settlement to Route 90 in Jericho.

With regard to attacks against educational staff and facilities in the West Bank, the Israeli forces raided Al-Maleh Elementary School in the northern Jordan Valley, and assaulted the school staff.

OIC Media Observatory on Israel's Crimes

In an interview, he gave to the "OIC Journal", Ambassador Samir Bakr Diab, Assistant Secretary-General for Palestine and Al-Quds Affairs, sheds light on the OIC Media Observatory on Israel's Crimes Against Palestinians: its creation, goals, challenges, and plans for further development.

Here are excerpts from the interview:

How did the idea of creating an "OIC Media Observatory on Israel's Crimes Against Palestinians" come about?

The creation of the observatory was decided upon by the leaders of the OIC Member States. The Resolution issued by the Extraordinary Joint Arab and Islamic Summit, held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on November 11, 2023, called, in Operative Paragraph 10, for establishing a media monitoring unit to document the crimes of the Israeli occupation authorities against the Palestinian people, alongside digital media platforms to expose these illegal and inhuman practices. Accordingly, the OIC General Secretariat began issuing weekly reports about the crimes and massacres committed by Israel, the occupying power, against the Palestinian people in Gaza, the West Bank, and Al-Quds Al-Sharif. The Department of Palestine and Al-Quds Affairs, in collaboration with the Information Department in charge of preparing the media publications, and the OIC Office in Ramallah, worked together to give concrete shape to the idea of the Observatory, which began operations on 23 January 2024.

The Observatory releases detailed weekly reports on the crimes committed by the Israeli forces and settlers. It also produces videos that highlight other aspects of these crimes, infographics summarizing the crimes, graphs that provide a broader temporal analysis covering several months, along with comparisons about the ongoing crimes and violations in the Palestinian Territory.

What are the sources of information used by the Observatory?

The Observatory gathers information with a meticulous concern for accuracy, ensuring that its sources are primarily the official, particularly Palestinian, institutions in charge of documenting all types of Israeli crimes. There



is direct collaboration between the Observatory and many of these institutions through the OIC Office in Ramallah, which serves as a link with the Palestinian State institutions. The Observatory also collaborates with prominent media institutions such as the Palestinian News and Information Agency (WAFA), and Palestine TV. There is also an ongoing cooperation with a number of Palestinian national institutions working on the ground inside Palestine to monitor and document the Israeli crimes against Palestinians. Additionally, the Observatory regularly consults reports and publications released by various United Nations organizations, which provide the latest statistics on the situation in Gaza, the West Bank, and Al-Quds. It analyzes these data and re-publishes them alongside the material available to it from other sources. It also draws material from prominent media institutions that record the events and document the crimes that the occupation army has perpetrated during the period of aggression on Gaza, and which it is still committing now in the West Bank.

The OIC Observatory is a media monitoring body, what platforms or channels does it use to reach out to the public?

The Observatory was developed in a gradual and steady manner. We began by creating a website for the Observatory, which publishes content in Arabic, English, and French, the three official languages of the OIC. The Information Technology Department at the OIC General Secretariat then developed a smart application, which is now available for download on smartphones. The Observatory will also issue a weekly newsletter via email to subscribers, featuring the Observatory's latest reports, videos, photographs, and other materials.

Who is the target audience for the Observatory?

The Observatory does not target one specific audience. It aims to spread information on the widest scale possible about those crimes. Since the paid promotion campaign began in late October, 2024, the Observatory's content has been viewed by 140 million individuals worldwide.

At the same time, the Observatory has sought to diversify its content in such a way as to cater to different audiences. For instance, the weekly written reports provide a detailed and in-depth coverage targeted at those specializing in Israeli crimes and at decision-makers, while the videos, with their simplicity and directness, target the general public. As for infographics, photographs, and other graphic materials, they offer a quick snapshot of the tragic situation in Gaza and the areas in the West Bank that are subjected to Israeli assaults.

Has the Observatory taken into account the changing media landscape and the widespread use of social media platforms instead of traditional media outlets?

Of course! The OIC's platforms on YouTube, X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, and Instagram are the main outlets for disseminating the Observatory's content. Through the weekly paid promotions, we publicize this material and - as I mentioned earlier - ensure they reach the widest possible audience. Additionally, the Observatory's content and the related photographs are sent to other media outlets, such as news agencies, TV, Radio, and newspapers in the OIC Member

Against Palestinians Reaches 140 Million Users

States and other countries, in the languages used by the Observatory.

What challenges does the Observatory face in exposing the facts and crimes taking place in Palestine?

Perhaps the main challenge is the restrictions imposed by social media platforms on the Observatory's content and its attempts to expose the Israeli crimes. Those platforms set conditions that limit the target audience's access to content, including through rejecting certain publications, imposing age-based restrictions on access, or requiring prior registration, among other limitations.

The Observatory has managed to overcome some of these obstacles, and is continuing its work as effectively as possible.

What areas do you consider as promising for developing the Observatory?

The Observatory has already established partnerships with Palestinian media institutions, and is working to expand these partnerships to include other media institutions in OIC Member States. It also works to finalize the development of its smart application for other smartphone app stores, as well as to develop the application to make it ready to receive video footage from users documenting the Israeli crimes in Palestine. Furthermore, the Observatory is planning to develop a podcast to expose, document, and contextualize the Israeli crimes. There are also plans to issue weekly and monthly news bulletins with a view to expanding the Observatory's reach.

It is often argued that Palestinian victims are not just numbers. How can the Observatory expose the crimes away from this

traditional issue associated with "numbers"?

The role of the Observatory is not merely to present statistics and numbers. More than that, it places them in dynamic formats such as video footage, enhanced with effects that reflect aspects of the Palestinian suffering. It also adds images and graphic materials, so that numbers serve only

Gaza, or does it extend beyond that?

Pursuant to the Resolution issued by the Arab and Islamic Summit, the Observatory's mandate is to expose the Israeli crimes throughout the entire Palestinian Territory, including Gaza, the West Bank, and Al-Quds Al-Sharif. These crimes are not linked to a specific place or time. It should be recalled that these crimes did not begin on October 7, 2023, in Gaza only, but rather with the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territory in 1967 and even before that, and

they have been perpetrated in Gaza, the West Bank, and occupied Al-Quds. It is true that Gaza has suffered from these crimes to a much greater extent, but this does not diminish the severity of the Israeli bloody crimes committed in other Palestinian areas, which are also being monitored and documented.

How can the Observatory serve the Palestinian Cause in the broader sense, and not just an aspect of the Palestinian suffering?

The Observatory provides significant moral support by exposing the Israeli crimes and highlighting the significance of the Palestinian Cause. It sheds light on the ethical dimensions of this Cause, as well as on its darker aspects, including the war crimes, ethnic cleansing, genocide, and crimes against humanity perpetrated by the occupation. Exposing violations and war crimes is indeed a crucial factor in supporting the struggle of the Palestinian people who are claiming their just rights, including their right to self-determination and to live in an independent and sovereign Palestinian State, in accordance with the resolutions and charters of the United Nations.



as elements that help the audience realize the scale of the humanitarian disaster that the occupation has caused in Gaza, and is now causing in the West Bank and occupied Al-Quds.

What are your aspirations? Is the Observatory's mandate granted to it by the Joint Arab and Islamic Summit limited to the events in



Generously Hosted by Saudi Arabia: OIC holds Donors' Conference to Support Displaced Persons and Refugees in the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin

Generously hosted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the "Donors' Conference to Support Displaced Persons and Refugees in the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin" was held at the headquarters of the OIC General Secretariat on October 26, 2024. The Conference was convened in line with the Resolution No. 4/49-ICHAD adopted at the 49th session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers.

The Conference was organized in collaboration and coordination between the OIC, King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSRelief), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Addressing the Conference, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Ibrahim Taha, stated that "the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, with its commendable initiative to host this event and its generous contribution to the efforts aimed at mobilizing the necessary resources to meet the needs of refugees and displaced persons in the Sahel countries and the Lake Chad Basin, not only entrenches a long-standing tradition of supporting friendly African countries, but also demonstrates its adherence

to the values of solidarity that have always been the basis of its approach and characterized its work within the framework of the OIC".

The Donors' Conference, he added, is a reflection of the effective solidarity between the OIC and its external partners who have been mobilized to provide a joint response to the urgent challenges associated with the acute crisis of displaced persons and refugees in a region severely affected by insecurity, climate change, and all forms of unrest. For his part, H.E. Eng. Walid bin Abdul Karim Al-Khurajji, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, stressed that "Saudi Arabia's hosting of the Conference reflects its keenness to serve humanitarian issues and provide assistance to peoples in need, in line with the OIC Charter and the resolution of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers."

The Conference sought to achieve a number of goals, including in particular raising awareness about the refugee and displacement crisis in the region in order to come up with strategies to address it, building strong partnerships to develop long-term solutions to the problems of displacement, food secu-

urity, and other crises, in addition to intensifying diplomatic work to prevent crises in the region, enhance effective response, achieve long-term goals, and mobilize resources for immediate humanitarian response.

Participants in the Conference agreed on the importance of mobilizing resources to provide support to more than 11 million people suffering from the consequences of displacement and asylum in the Sahel region and the Lake Chad Basin.

As part of this Conference, a high-level session was held, with the participation of Dr. Abdullah Al Rabeeah, Advisor at the Royal Court of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in charge of the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center; Ms. Joyce Musaya, Acting Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator at the United Nations; Mr. Raouf Mazou, Assistant High Commissioner for Operations of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; and Ms. Zubaida Abubakar Omar, Director-General of the Emergency Management Agency in Nigeria; in addition to a representative of the European Union.



7 African Countries and 11 million Beneficiaries in the Sahel and Lake Chad Region

The high-level session held as part of the “Donors’ Conference to Support Displaced Persons and Refugees in the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin” saw a positive interaction from the participants. The session reviewed the efforts of King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSRelief) and international agencies in supporting refugees and displaced persons and addressing the humanitarian situation, especially in the Sahel and Lake Chad region.

The Conference was designed to serve several key goals, including raising awareness about the displacement and refugee crisis in the Sahel and Lake Chad region, and mobilizing financial resources for immediate humanitarian response to this crisis and to any future challenges in this important part of the African Continent.

The session was addressed by the relevant ministers from the countries of the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin (Nigeria, Niger, Mauritania, Chad, Cameroon, Burkina Faso and Mali) who provided a detailed review of the humanitarian situation in their respective

countries, and the requirements to address these crises. Representatives of OIC Member States also spoke during the donation session, expressing their support for efforts to end the displacement crisis in the region. At the close of the Conference, the OIC Secretary-General extended his sincere thanks and gratitude to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, represented by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, and Crown Prince, Prime Minister HRH Prince Mohammed bin Salman, for the support and assistance they provide to the OIC so that it can achieve its goals. The Secretary-General also commended the efforts of King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center, and its continuous support for the OIC’s projects, particularly its cooperation to make this Conference a success. He extended thanks and appreciation to the United Nations agencies and to Member States for their coordination and cooperation to meet the Conference goals. With the conclusion of the “Donors’ Conference to Support Refugees and Displaced

People in the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin”, held at the headquarters of the OIC General Secretariat on October 26, 2024, which saw a wide participation and was crowned with unparalleled success, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, sent cables of thanks and gratitude to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, and HRH Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, Crown Prince and Prime Minister. He commended the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for its sincere efforts, for the customary warm reception and generous hospitality, and for the great success and significant outcomes of the Conference, appreciated by all participants who were offered great hospitality throughout their stay in the Kingdom.

The Secretary-General stressed that the generous donation provided by Saudi Arabia to support refugees and displaced people in the countries of the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin is aligned with the Kingdom’s firm and steadfast policy and its historical positions in strengthening Islamic solidarity.



A glow stick sows terror among Palestinians in forced displacement from Jabalia

“Don’t drop it or you will die”! With these words, an investigator working for the Israeli occupation army warned the young Palestinian Khalil Taha from Jabalia refugee camp in northern Gaza, after hours of interrogation. He then handed him a glow stick and ordered him to go south.

Taha and his family were forcibly displaced from Jabalia camp after surviving more than 40 days of siege, hunger, and intense Israeli airstrikes on northern Gaza.

Taha, 39, a father of three, said in a phone call with the German News Agency, “We tried to stay in our home despite all the bombing, destruction, fear, and terror. We didn’t want to be displaced and leave our property. We hoped to spend the rest of our lives in our house.”

The occupation army stormed the neighborhood where they lived and ordered all civilians at gunpoint to leave immediately, or they would all be bombed, which forced Taha to surrender.

“We went out with our hands raised,” Taha adds. “The occupation army ordered us to take off our clothes and leave only our underwear. They separated us from our fami-

lies and ordered us to go south, and then they arrested us for field interrogation.”

“My wife,” he continues, “had to carry my nine-year-old daughter - who suffers from a physical disability - and move towards Gaza ... The screams of my little girl and the crying of my wife and children still echo in my ears. Many of those who were taken by the occupation army for interrogation were either executed cold-bloodedly or arrested and transferred to Israel.”

“We stayed for long hours,” he adds, “without knowing what our fate would be. Would we be arrested? Or would the Israeli soldiers kill us? Later, I was summoned for interrogation in a UNRWA school that had been turned into an interrogation center where I was beaten and insulted. I kept swearing to them that I am a civilian and unarmed.”

Fortunately for Taha, one of the interrogating officers told him that he would be released, but only after he carried a light stick, with orders given in a sharp tone carrying threats and intimidation: “Don’t drop it or break it, or you will be killed”.

With hurried steps, Taha fled the school

towards Gaza City to join his family whose fate he did not know, carrying the glow stick, which was, as he put it, “the only life-line from the occupation’s bombing.”

Taha continued to walk with dozens of other people for long hours until nightfall. Along the way, he saw multiple light sticks thrown on the ground, and felt as though he was walking over the bodies of people who had been killed. He says, “I felt scared all the time... I was afraid I would be targeted and leave my family alone... No one can imagine the situation we were in as we were carrying this stick that controlled our fate.”

The glow stick, Taha explains, is a piece of plastic that lights up when broken. It only lasts for about 12 hours and then goes out. It has no on/off button. The occupation forces claim that they use these sticks as a means of distinguishing civilians. They estimate the distance that someone holding the stick might walk, and if he drops it, he will be targeted. Several men were targeted after throwing away the sticks and killed during their displacement. Haut du formulaire
Bas du formulaire

The Shortest Distance Between the News and the Audience

Can any of us realize how social media platforms, which have gained their popularity thanks to their down-to-earth realism and the spontaneity of their content creators—without audiovisual effects or linguistic embellishments—have turned into a fertile ground for improvisation, lying, and falsification, incorporating all the tools of fabrication and manipulation?

One of the striking features that one can observe in what is being circulated on social media is this absolute realism that has attracted a large audience to this type of media, turning it from a professional journalistic practice studied in universities and institutes into a mere spontaneous scene captured by a curious young person with his mobile phone on a sidewalk, with images transmitted in an arbitrary and clumsy manner. This improvised media content garners millions of followers, and its creator is soon given the title of “influencer” and even “journalist” by the common people. More than that, the creator of a given video clip may even become wealthy as the viewership counter brings him profit, advertisements, and sponsorship of global products.

In fact, this “news spontaneity”, with its directness and distinctiveness, has attracted an audience already fed up with the classical, polished news—news that used to be carefully written, edited, and refined in journalistic institutions, and then revised and “crowned” with a “professional” headline, while being subjected to the standards of journalistic ethics.

Over time, this “news spontaneity” has developed into what can be considered as blatant fabrication, often in a naive and weak manner, with its life span - in the “news recycling process” characterizing social media - not exceeding a few hours.

With the current advances in artificial intelligence, especially in terms of image creation and the ability to produce fake videos that are identical to reality, coupled with the overwhelming flow of media content that does not allow time to catch one’s breath or to distinguish the valuable from the worthless, and with anybody and everybody having entered the field of the media, there is actually a need to sort out what was once considered the shortest distance between the event and its audience.

Actually, a short video that an adolescent captures by chance and immediately posts on his TikTok or Snapchat account can, within minutes, become an exclusive media breakthrough, making this young man’s account a unique media platform that garners millions of views in just a few hours.

All this raises the need to analyze the current human mind that grew up with, and is now swayed by, such contradictions and whims; to see how this mind easily shifts between a true piece of news and a fabricated one, between a real video and one filled with blatant falsehoods, all in the midst of an endless flood of news and content that, in fact, seeks to distract more than to educate or inform.

The mind of the audience is now predisposed to receive all types of inputs without suspicion or complaint, with even some sort of addiction to this daily, routine practice.

As a substitute for the media, initially a means of conveying, with supposed accuracy, news about what is happening on the streets, this endless flow of news is now serving as a social driver, reducing interest in the search for truth, and creating an unprecedented state of laziness among individuals who now content themselves with what is posted on social media pages. They have, in fact, become a captive of a restless tsunami of news, daily following their upward and downward movement, without the least bit of effort to distinguish truth from falsity.

This type of media has become the “joystick” that controls the mood of the street, shapes public opinion in just a few minutes, and directs people’s attention toward a highly specific matter, at the expense of broader, more important societal issues.

With the “new media” attracting the audience, pushing them to “rebel” against the traditional media, despite their rigor and sobriety, and to be drawn towards a crude, raw, unpolished content, to the point of trusting the authenticity of a video that clearly looks fake, one cannot help wondering about how humans actually build their vision of things, and how they can discern the truth, with their highest aspiration being how the myths they have in their minds become irrefutable truths.

This oddity might provide a logical explanation for the history of the human being whose first news was about “A man hunting an elephant”, and who creates his own myths and accumulates his wishes upon the truths he himself has produced.

Truth is the long-pursued goal of the human being, for the sake of which he has built schools, universities, and research centers, produced books and studies, and made inventions and discoveries. Paradoxically, he is the same human being who now easily fabricates and believes falsehoods, defends them as being “sacred”, and is even ready to die for them.



Aiman Abboushi
Editor of the OIC Journal

This type of media has become the “joystick” that controls the mood of the street, shapes public opinion in just a few minutes, and directs people’s attention toward a highly specific matter, at the expense of broader, more important societal issues.

BILATERALS



The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received, on October 3, 2024, in his office at the OIC headquarters in Jeddah, H.E. Amb. Turko Daudov, Permanent Observer of the Russian Federation to the OIC.



The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received, on November 21, 2024, in his office at the OIC headquarters in Jeddah, H.E. Mr. Farrukh Sharifzoda, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan.



The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received, on October 21, 2024, in his office at the OIC headquarters in Jeddah, H.E. Ms. Kjersti Tromsdal, new Ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.



The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received, on October 20, 2024, H.E. Mr. Miah Md Mainul Kabir, Consul General of Bangladesh in Jeddah and the Alternate Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the OIC.



The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received, on November 21, 2024, in his office at the OIC headquarters in Jeddah, H.E. Mr. Hans Peter van der Woude, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.



The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received, on November 24, 2024, in his office at the OIC headquarters in Jeddah, H.E. Ms. Sabina Aliyeva, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

BILATERALS



The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received, on November 7, 2024, in his office at the OIC headquarters in Jeddah, H.E. Amb. Shadi Al-Sharqawi, Permanent Representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the OIC.



The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received, on November 18, 2024, in his office at the OIC headquarters in Jeddah, H.E. Amb. Cenk Uraz, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Türkiye to the OIC.



The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received, on December 24, 2024, H.E. Amb. Maher Karaki, Permanent Representative of the State of Palestine to the OIC, who paid a farewell visit to the Secretary-General.



The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received, on October 27, 2024, in his office at the OIC headquarters in Jeddah, H.E. Amb. Shahin Abdullayev, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the OIC.



The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received, on November 24, 2024, H.E. Amb. Nodirjon Turgunov, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.



The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received, on November 7, 2024, H.E. Mr. Mohammed Samir Al-Naqshbandi, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Iraq to the OIC.

Special Envoy of OIC Secretary-General for Afghanistan Holds Consultations in Pakistan



Ambassador Tarig Ali Bakheet, OIC Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian, Cultural and Family Affairs, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, paid an official visit, on 29 October 2024 in Islamabad, to H.E. Amb. Amna Baloch, Foreign Secretary of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Both sides exchanged views on political, economic, and humanitarian issues of mutual interest in relation to Afghanistan. They also addressed ways and means to further the mandate granted by the OIC resolutions.

During the meeting, Ambassador Bakheet delivered an official written message from the OIC Secretary-General to the Foreign Minister of Pakistan on the latest developments regarding the OIC's work and activities in Afghanistan in support of the Afghan people. Both sides stressed the importance of pursuing coordination, consultation, and cooperation in pursuit of stability and progress in Afghanistan.

Ambassador Bakheet also met with H.E. Ambassador Ahmed Naseem Warraich, Additional Secretary (Afghanistan & West Asia). During the meeting, both sides exchanged views on the various forms of international engagement in Afghanistan and ways to strengthen this engagement. They also discussed the joint efforts to pursue a constructive dialogue with the de facto authorities on various issues, including girls' education, counter-terrorism, and humani-

tarian aspects. Ambassador Bakheet highlighted the importance of strengthening the Afghanistan Humanitarian Trust Fund

The OIC General Secretariat issued a statement in which it drew attention to the fact that Afghan women have seen yet again their fundamental rights to education severely compromised, with a decree issued banning women from pursuing nursing and midwifery courses

(AHTF) under the aegis of the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB).

On November 25, 2024, Ambassador Bakheet received in his office at the OIC headquarters in Jeddah, H.E. Mr. Andy McCoubrey, UK Special Representative for Afghanistan. The meeting addressed the situation in Afghanistan as part of the follow-up to the key issues discussed at the recently held Doha UN Meeting of Special Envoys on Afghanistan. Both sides underlined the pressing need to enhance construc-

tive dialogue with the de facto authorities in Afghanistan in a bid to effectively meet the multiple challenges facing the country, including economic, humanitarian, and human rights priorities.

Still regarding the situation in Afghanistan, the OIC General Secretariat issued a statement on December 5, 2024, in which it drew attention to the fact that Afghan women have seen yet again their fundamental rights to education severely compromised. Recent reports from Kabul indicate that a decree was issued banning women from pursuing nursing and midwifery courses. The statement indicated that in view of this worrying step that runs counter to the relevant OIC resolutions, the General Secretariat expressed its grave concern over this unexpected and deeply disappointing decision. It deplored this new restrictive decree barring women from pursuing medical education, considering that such a decision comes not just as a frustrating impingement on the fundamental rights of Afghan women, but is also likely to have a detrimental impact on Afghanistan's healthcare system, which is already facing formidable challenges.

The General Secretariat has been quite hopeful that through its continuous commitment to constructive dialogue with the de facto authorities in Kabul, positive measures would be taken by the Afghan authorities to lift any ban on Afghan girls' access to education, in line with the relevant OIC Resolutions and women's rights in Islam. It insistently called on the de facto authorities in Kabul to revisit these measures.

On another note, the OIC General Secretariat vehemently condemned the explosion that took place on December 11, 2024, in the Afghan capital, Kabul, killing the Acting Minister for Refugees and Repatriation and several others. It strongly deplored this brutal attack, and insisted on the need to bring its perpetrators to justice.

The General Secretariat noted that the security environment in Afghanistan has admittedly improved over the past couple of years, but such vile attacks continue to threaten the security and safety of the Afghan society; hence the pressing need to step up efforts toward eradicating terrorist groups that seem to be bent on undermining security and peace in Afghanistan.

Uzbekistan and Afghanistan: Cooperation for Stability in the Region

The cooperation between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan has deep historical roots and continues to develop amidst contemporary political and economic challenges. Uzbekistan was one of the first countries in the region to initiate dialogue with the current Afghan authorities. Today, Tashkent and Kabul are working on expanding their bilateral relations, with both sides recently increasing the frequency of high-level visits focused on security, economic development, and socio-cultural ties.

On March 12-13, 2024, a delegation from Uzbekistan, led by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Bakhtiyor Saidov, visited Kabul. The agenda covered a broad range of bilateral cooperation issues, including the intensification of economic relations. In Kabul, the foreign policy department of Uzbekistan met with Acting Prime Minister Mullah Mohammad Hassan Akhund, Acting Deputy Prime Minister Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi, Acting Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, Acting Foreign Minister Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi, Acting Interior Minister Sirajuddin Haqqani, and Acting Minister of Commerce and Industry Nuriddin Azizi.

On May 12, 2024, an Uzbek delegation, including the Special Representative of the President for Afghanistan Ismatulla Irgashev, engineers developing a feasibility study for the “Termez-Mazar-i-Sharif-Kabul-Peshawar” railway project, and a technical team from the geology and mining sector, led by Transport Minister Ilkhom Makhkamov, visited Afghanistan for discussions with Acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi. The Uzbek side expressed its readiness to assist Afghanistan in restoring cultural heritage sites and religious shrines. In Mazar-i-Sharif, with the involvement of Uzbek specialists, construction began on a madrasa complex named after Imam al-Bukhari, covering an area of 0.6 hectares and costing \$6 million. This educational institution, designed for 1,000 students, will be the largest in Afghanistan and also a center dedicated to Islamic heritage studies.

One of the highest-ranking foreign officials to visit Kabul since the Taliban came to power was Uzbek Prime Minister Abdulla Aripov. On August 17, 2024, he led a delegation to participate in a business forum and open the “Made in Uzbekistan” exhibition in Kabul. During this visit, the parties signed 35 investment and trade agreements totaling \$2.5 billion. The steady growth of bilateral trade was noted, with trade turnover between the two countries reaching \$572 million in the first half of this year—a rise of 18% compared to the same period last year. The Prime Minister Aripov’s visit reflects the deepening economic ties between the two countries.

On August 29, 2024, a Taliban delegation led by Afghanistan’s Deputy Prime Minister of Economic Affairs Abdul Ghani Baradar attended the official opening of the International Trade Center in Termez, designed to support transit cargo between Uzbekistan and South Asia.

On October 9, 2024, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan signed a contract for gas exploration and extraction at the “Tuti-Maidan” block in the Afghan provinces of Jowzjan and Faryab in northern Afghanistan. This ten-year contract includes approximately \$1 billion in investments.

Uzbekistan demonstrates its commitment to strengthening cooperation with Afghanistan on both regional and international levels. At the tenth international scientific and practical conference of the SCO RATS and the Second CIS Conference on Counterterrorism and Extremism held on September 4-5, Uzbekistan emphasized the importance of supporting Afghanistan in combating terrorism, warning that weakened countermeasures could bolster terrorist networks, which, in turn, threatens Central Asian security.

On September 25, 2024, during the 79th session of the UN General Assembly, Uzbekistan’s Foreign Minister Bakhtiyor Saidov stated that Afghanistan is an integral part of Central Asia and expressed regret that the international community has yet to resolve the country’s complex situation. “Uzbekistan pursues a pragmatic policy towards its neighbor and will continue to contribute to Afghanistan’s economic recovery and the development of its transportation and energy infrastructure,” the official said.

In conclusion, the current stage of Uzbek-Afghan cooperation is a crucial element for stability and development in Central Asia. Strengthening political, economic, and cultural ties between the two countries opens new opportunities for both sides, fostering a peaceful and stable region.

Reflecting on the points above, it is clear that Uzbek-Afghan cooperation paves the way for political and economic collaboration. The implementation of joint infrastructure projects, such as railways and energy facilities, has the potential to not only boost economic development but also provide access to alternative infrastructure routes beyond existing networks.



Axmad Mamasodiqov,
Independent researcher and expert on regional security issues

An Uzbek delegation, including the Special Representative of the President for Afghanistan Ismatulla Irgashev, engineers developing a feasibility study for the “Termez-Mazar-i-Sharif-Kabul-Peshawar” railway project, visited Afghanistan for discussions with Acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi.



UN General Assembly Adopts Resolution on Cooperation with OIC

The OIC General Secretariat welcomed the United Nations General Assembly's adoption, on November 18, 2024, of Resolution A/79/L.9/Rev.1, titled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation". It expressed gratitude for the countries that sponsored and supported this resolution, highlighting their commitment to global peace, security, and cooperation.

The Resolution, which was adopted unanimously, emphasizes the shared goals and collaborative efforts of the OIC and the United Nations in addressing global challenges. It reaffirms both Organizations' commitment to conflict prevention, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, post-conflict rehabilitation, and the promotion of a culture of peace. It also addresses issues that impact Muslim communities globally, with a particular focus on interfaith dialogue and cooperative initiatives.

The Resolution underscores the desire for closer collaboration between the OIC and the UN in a range of fields. It particularly stresses the importance of the OIC-UN partnership in advancing the Middle East peace process and combating intolerance, discrimination based on religion or belief, and

violent extremism. It also calls for further collaboration on issues such as counterterrorism and conflict mediation.

Taking this opportunity, the OIC reiterated its call on the international community to intensify its efforts to implement the UN resolutions on the Palestinian Cause, urging the recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to establish their independent State with East Al-Quds as its capital. Amid the ongoing global conflicts, the OIC emphasized the growing importance of the UN-OIC partnership, recognizing its strategic value in addressing both emerging and prolonged crises.

On November 12, 2024, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, attended the opening of COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan. The opening session, titled the "World Leaders Climate Action Summit", featured the participation of UN Secretary-General António Guterres and over 70 Heads of State and Government from nearly 190 countries.

In his opening remarks, the President of Azerbaijan shed special light on his country's membership of the OIC, along with other international and regional organizations, positioning Azerbaijan as a vital bridge for

negotiating climate action.

The OIC General Secretariat also took part in the 4th Consultative Forum of the Regional Cooperation Organizations (RCOs) in the OIC Region, which kicked off in Marrakesh, Morocco, on November 19, 2024.

Participants in the Forum, organized jointly by the Islamic Centre for the Development of Trade and the Islamic Development Bank Group, exchanged views on issues of mutual interest, reviewed progress in ongoing activities, especially as regards promoting trade and investment in common Member States, and identified priority activities for coordination and collaboration in the next biennium.

In his message to the Forum, the OIC Secretary-General emphasized the importance of the Forum for building a more inclusive mechanism among regional organizations in the OIC space, in order to facilitate the sharing of knowledge, information, and expertise, as well as to promote the optimum utilization of resources for common purposes. He also underscored the need to identify priority areas where joint activities can be implemented in common Member States.

High-level Conference on International Anti-terrorism Cooperation

H.H. Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Crown Prince of the State of Kuwait, and H.E. President Imam Ali Rahman of the Republic of Tajikistan, inaugurated the High-Level Conference on “Strengthening International Counter-Terrorism Cooperation and Building Agile Border Security Mechanisms – The Kuwait Phase”. This event took place in Kuwait on November 4-5, 2024.

A delegation from the OIC General Secretariat, led by Mr. Yousef Aldobeay, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, attended the Conference organized by the State of Kuwait in collaboration with the Republic of Tajikistan and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT). The conference saw wide participation from Foreign and Interior Ministers of Arab, African, and Asian countries, senior security officials, ambassadors, and special envoys, in addition to secretaries-general and representatives of international and regional organizations.

In a speech on behalf of the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, delivered during the Ministerial Session of this international Conference, the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs emphasized that terrorism poses a significant threat to global peace, security, development, and stability. This threat is compounded by the emergence of complex and unprecedented



challenges, requiring a prompt, effective and coordinated response from nations as well as

regional and international organizations. Mr. Aldobeay stressed that combating terrorism to strengthen the foundations of peace, security, and stability in the world requires addressing the root causes of terrorism and the extremism leading to it, as well as establishing the necessary foundations and mechanisms within a comprehensive approach to dry up the sources of this scourge. In this context, he reviewed the various efforts undertaken by the OIC General Secretariat to firmly counter terrorism. The OIC has been proactive in establishing the requisite legal frameworks, notably through approving a treaty aimed at combating terrorism in 1999, in an endeavor to strengthen coordination among OIC Member States and develop practical and effective mechanisms to counter terrorist threats.

Mr. Aldobeay added that the OIC has adopted several resolutions at the Summit and CFM levels, to bolster collaboration among Member States in the fight against terrorism. Notably, six resolutions were adopted during the 50th session of the Council of Foreign Ministers, held in Yaoundé in August 2024. He concluded by reaffirming the importance the OIC attaches, as part of its counter-terrorism efforts, to fostering close partnerships with various partners and international organizations.

Indonesia’s Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Holds Talks with OIC Delegation



H.E. Mr. Muhammad Anis Matta, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, received, on December 16, 2024, the OIC delegation visiting Indonesia at the invitation of “Muhammadiyah” Organization. The meeting was attended by leaders from Muhammadiyah, along with representatives from research institutions, NGOs,

and civil society organizations active in the Palestinian territories.

During the meeting, the Indonesian Vice-Minister noted that this is the first time Indonesia designates a Vice-Minister in charge of the Muslim world affairs, which reflects the Government’s commitment to further strengthen its relations with all Mus-

lim countries and its constant support for the causes of the Muslim Ummah, particularly the Cause of Palestine which has been subjected to siege and bombing for more than one year now.

The Vice-Minister highlighted the role of “Muhammadiyah” as a pioneering national organization playing a significant role in designing and implementing, in an autonomous way, various programs to promote education and health as priority areas, along with its active engagement in channeling humanitarian aid to Gaza and to other countries in need of assistance. He indicated that the OIC delegation’s visit to Indonesia is part of constructive and effective cooperation between the two parties, based on a promising and multifaceted bilateral agenda.

OIC Dispatches Election Observers to 6 Member States

Indonesia

At the invitation of the Chairman of the General Elections Commission of the Republic of Indonesia to participate in the Visit Program from 25 to 28 November 2024, coinciding with the regional elections held on November 27, 2024, a mission of election observers was dispatched by the OIC General Secretariat.

In a meeting with the Chairman of the General Elections Commission, the delegation conveyed the greetings of the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, and his wishes for the success of the electoral process.

The delegation was briefed on the electoral process. It discussed ways of enhancing cooperation between the General Elections Commission and the OIC General Secretariat in the field of elections.

The OIC delegation participated in the Visit Program, and provided an overview of the OIC and its activities in the international arena, with a focus on its efforts in terms of election observation and the OIC's commitment to enhancing electoral practices through capacity-building and expertise-sharing among the OIC Member States.

Kyrgyzstan

The OIC Election Observation Mission, dispatched by the Secretary-General to the Kyrgyz Republic to observe the local Council elections held on 17 November 2024, noted with satisfaction that the electoral process was conducted in a peaceful and orderly atmosphere, in line with Kyrgyz election laws and established International standards.

The Secretary-General congratulated the people and government of Kyrgyzstan on the successful organization of the elections, which would strengthen democratic and institutional practices towards further development and progress for the country and its people.

Uzbekistan

Upon the invitation of the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the OIC General Secretariat dispatched a mission of observers to the parliamentary elections in Uzbekistan, held on October 27, 2024.

The OIC team observed the electoral process at a number of polling stations in the capital Tashkent and its suburbs. The team was



briefed on the organization and conduct of the electoral process, and the measures taken to ensure its success.

The team commended the excellent level of organization, which is a crucial step towards strengthening democratic institutions.

The OIC General Secretariat congratulated the Uzbek people on the successful organization of the parliamentary elections, and expressed confidence that the elected parliament will contribute to enhancing the socio-economic development of the country and the prosperity of its people.

Iraq

At the invitation of the Independent High Electoral Commission of Iraq, the OIC General Secretariat dispatched a mission of observers to the parliamentary elections in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, which took place on October 20, 2024.

The OIC team observed the electoral process in a number of polling stations in the city of Erbil and its suburbs. It held meetings with officials from the Independent High Electoral Commission, and received a briefing on the organization of the electoral process, and the measures taken to ensure its success.

Mozambique

In response to an invitation from the Government of the Republic of Mozambique, the OIC General Secretariat dispatched a delegation to observe the presidential, parliamentary, and gubernatorial elections held on October 9, 2024.

The delegation met with the Chairman of the National Election Authority of Mozambique, Mr. Carlos Matsinda. The meeting addressed preparations for the elections and ways to enhance future cooperation between the OIC and Mozambique in this important field.

Tunisia

The OIC General Secretariat dispatched a mission of observers to the presidential elections held in Tunisia on October 6, 2024.

The OIC team visited several polling stations in the capital, Tunis, and other cities, to observe the electoral process. The team met with the President and members of the Independent High Authority for Elections. They were briefed on the organization and management of the electoral process, and the measures taken to ensure its success.

The OIC Secretary-General congratulated the Tunisian people on the successful conduct of the presidential elections.

10th Edition of the Holy Sites Journey Program for Arab and Islamic Youth

The "Journey to Holy Sites in Islam for Youth of Arab and Islamic Countries", organized by the Ministry of Sports of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in coordination with the General Secretariats of the OIC and the League of Arab States, was successfully concluded. The 10th edition closed with an official ceremony held in Jeddah on December 7, 2024, in the presence of H.E. Mr. Abdulaziz bin Abdul Rahman Al-Musad, Undersecretary for Sports Affairs, representing HRH Prince Abdulaziz bin Turki Al-Faisal, Minister of Sports of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Chair of the 5th session of the Islamic Conference on Youth and Sports Ministers (ICYSM), as well as officials from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and representatives from the OIC General Secretariat and the League of Arab States.

In his closing statement, H.E. the Undersecretary for Sports Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia expressed his thanks to the Member States that sent participants, as well as to the General Secretariats of the OIC and the League of Arab States for their coordination with the Ministry of Sports, which contributed to the success of the program. He urged the participants to serve,

upon their return to their home countries, as ambassadors to convey the significant evolution of Saudi Arabia's services to pilgrims. He also expressed his country's readiness to continue this initiative and organize other similar programs and activities for youth in Arab and Islamic countries as part of joint Islamic action.

Speaking on behalf of H.E. Mr. Houssein Ibrahim Taha, OIC Secretary-General, Amb. Tarig Bakheet, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian, Cultural, and Social Affairs, stressed that the program serves as a model of intra-OIC cooperation, reflecting Saudi Arabia's unwavering commitment to nurturing youth in the Islamic world. He indicated that the OIC General Secretariat will take the necessary steps to highlight, at the highest levels, the valuable efforts undertaken by Saudi Arabia in organizing this ten-day program for young people from Arab and Muslim countries, particularly at the level of the Islamic Conference of Youth and Sports Ministers, the Council of Foreign Ministers, and the Islamic Summit.

The closing ceremony also featured remarks by H.E. Minister Plenipotentiary Mr. Faisal Al-Ghasal, Representative of the League

of Arab States, along with a panel session on the role of youth in providing services to the performers of Hajj and Umrah. The session was addressed by Dr. Shams Alsaby, Director-General of Youth Activities at the Saudi Ministry of Sports, and Mr. Rakan Almaddah, Vice President of the Kingdom Discovery Sector at the Pilgrims Experience Program (PEP). Videos showcasing the various stages of the 2024 program and participants' experiences were screened during the ceremony.

The program offered participants a transformative journey that included performing Umrah and visiting significant Islamic holy sites in Jeddah, Makkah, and Al-Madinah. Participants engaged in cultural exchanges and interactive sessions, and had the chance to attend a high-profile football match between Al-Nassr and Al-Ittihad in Jeddah.

In her remarks at the beginning of the event, Dr. Shams Alsaby, Director-General of Youth Activities at the Saudi Ministry of Sports, had welcomed all participants in this program, indicating that about 144 young men and women and 65 heads of delegation were taking part in this event.



OIC Participates in Two Conferences on Arabic Language in Dubai and N'Djamena

The OIC General Secretariat, represented by the Department of Cultural Affairs, participated as a Guest of Honor at the 10th International Conference of the Arabic Language, held on October 10-12, 2024 in Dubai, UAE, under the patronage of HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Dubai. This participation came as part of implementing the MoU signed between the OIC General Secretariat and the Arabic Language International Council on May 29, 2024, with the aim of supporting efforts to strengthen the presence of the Arabic language in international fora and enhance its status among the world's languages.

The Conference was attended by representatives from Member States, regional and international organizations, and civil society institutions concerned with the Arabic language.

The highlight of the event was the granting of the "Mohammed Bin Rashid Award for Arabic Language", the most significant award in the history of the Arabic language. Additionally, hundreds of research works and scientific and field studies related to the Arabic language across various disciplines and professions were showcased. The Conference also featured several innovative initiatives aimed at promoting the education and dissemination of the Arabic language.

The General Secretariat also took part in conducting the 9th panel of the Conference titled: "Efforts of National, Arab, and International Organizations and Institutions in Serving the Arabic Language". It reviewed the OIC's efforts and activities designed to strengthen the capacities of relevant institutions.

The purpose of the Conference was to promote the Arabic language and preserve the Arab-Islamic identity, as well as to enhance the utilization of knowledge produced in Arabic. It sought to assert the presence of Arabic in various civilizations through the exchange of information, documents, and publications related to topics of mutual interest, particularly concerning language policies, enhancing Arabic language education, and promoting its dissemination in the Arab and international arenas.



The General Secretariat's participation in this conference aligned with its commitment to empowering the Arabic language (the language of the Holy Quran) and enhancing its presence and dissemination, in implementation of the Ministerial Resolution No. 13/50, on the Arabic language, issued during the 50th session of the Council of Foreign Ministers held on August 29-30, 2024, in Yaoundé, Cameroon. The resolution aims to promote and support the use of Arabic in various regional and global platforms.

In the same context, the OIC General Secretariat took part in the International Scientific Conference on "Arabic Language Challenges in Africa and Prospects for Civilizational Communication," held on December 18-20, 2024, in the Chadian capital, N'Djamena.

The Conference was organized by the Supreme Council of the Arabic Language in Africa, in cooperation with the General Union of Arabic Language Support Institutions in Chad, King Faisal University in Chad, and other institutions interested in the Arabic language in Africa and beyond. It was held under the high patronage of His Excellency the President of the Republic of Chad, Marshal Mahamat Idriss Déby Itno, and the honorary chairmanship of His Eminence the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Dr. Ahmed El-Tayeb.

Dr. Rami Mohamed Inshasi, the representative of the OIC General Secretariat, delivered

a speech on behalf of the Secretary-General in which he commended the efforts of the Chadian leadership in hosting this important conference which addresses the Arabic language and its religious and cultural significance, its impact in building human civilization in general, and specifically in Africa, and its contribution to shaping the identity and civilization for the people of the African continent. He also hailed the efforts of King Faisal University, a shining beacon in Chad and across the African continent, for its role in promoting the Arabic language and Islamic culture and civilization. He appreciated the establishment of the "Supreme Council for the Arabic Language in Africa" by a group of individuals with a passion for the Arabic language, during their founding conference held in December 2022 in Ndjamen. This Council serves as a unifying body for those interested in the Arabic language in Africa, addressing issues related to promoting the language and enhancing its status, as well as conducting academic studies in this regard.

The Conference was held as part of the 12th National Week for the Arabic Language in Chad and the celebration of World Arabic Language Day in 2024. It aimed to discuss the issues, challenges, and opportunities associated with Arabic language education in Africa.



Katara

Cultural Tourism

Over the course of 13 years, since Qatar launched the Katara Cultural Village as a destination for lovers of cultural tourism, reflecting the country's position as a meeting point where cultures blend, Katara has successfully cemented its presence on Qatar's tourism map.

Katara is located between the West Bay area and the modern Lusail City, distinguished by the Katara Towers with their crescent-shaped design in Lusail Marina.

Katara is a multi-component tourist destination, an ideal place for those seeking a multifaceted cultural experience in one location. The Village features two mosques worth visiting, especially for lovers of Islamic architecture. The first mosque, known as "Katara Masjid", was designed by Turkish architect Zeynep Fadillo lu, and is distinguished by its Persian and Turkish tilework. The minaret, dome, and mihrab (prayer niche) are inspired by famous mosques across the Islamic world, along with decorations reminiscent of the Dolmabahçe Palace in Istanbul. Next to the Mosque, visitors can enjoy viewing the prominent Pigeon Towers. The second mosque is the "Golden Masjid", located in front of the open-air theater. It is covered in golden tiles, and represents the Ottoman style with its wooden lattice doors.

The Katara Cultural Foundation holds various religious programs and lectures there, with the participation of eminent scholars, in addition to hosting advanced Quran memorization courses, which attract significant participation from people of all ages and social groups.

For theater lovers, the open-air theater is a major attraction. Designed in classical Greek style, the theater spans 3,275 square meters, and reflects Islamic influences, particularly with its arched entrances. It can accommodate up to 5,000 spectators.

Katara contributes to making Qatar a major world-class destination for visual art enthusiasts, through numerous art exhibitions, workshops, and display areas. The Qatar Museums Gallery showcases works by local and international artists, focusing on human-centered themes. The Katara Art Center serves as an independently-run platform dedicated to contemporary art and transdisciplinary creative endeavors, projects, and practices.

One of the main family-friendly attractions in the Village is "Al-Thuraya Planetarium" which offers a rare experience to visitors, including families and astronomy enthusiasts. It features a full-dome digital system with a seating capacity of 200 visitors for a journey

to observe the universe.

Since shopping is an essential part of most tourist trips, Katara offers the "21 High Street", the ultimate shopping outdoor destination in Doha, with a luxury car route that leads shoppers to the famous French store "Galeries Lafayette". 21 High St. offers comfort year-round with its powerful cooling system, allowing visitors to dine or sit in cafes outdoors without feeling the heat of summer.

Visitors to Katara can enjoy the Katara Hills, which feature breathtaking landscapes, water bodies, and walking paths for hikers and pedestrians. They can also visit the Katara Beach where all water tourism activities can be practiced, from jet-skiing to water-skiing. The cultural village of Katara features a variety of restaurants and cafes, catering to the diverse tastes of its visitors with an array of dining options.

At the same time, Katara has successfully made its mark on the Arab cultural scene, through a series of literary awards and cultural events, such as the Katara Prize for Prophet's Poet, the Nabati poetry competition, the Katara Quran Recitation Award, the Nahma Art Festival, the S'hail Exhibition, along with painting and visual art exhibitions and various heritage activities.

Symposium on the Islamic World and the Question of Shared Identity



As part of cooperation and coordination between the OIC General Secretariat and cultural institutions and bodies in Member States, the OIC General Secretariat held on November 25, 2024, in collaboration with the Gulf Research Center in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, a virtual cultural symposium titled: "The Islamic World and the Question of Shared Identity".

The Symposium was designed to come out with recommendations for formulating cultural policies, at the national level and within international institutions, in order to contribute to strengthening shared identity under the umbrella of the OIC, which would, in turn, bolster cooperation among Member States across various political, social, and economic fields.

The Symposium touched upon several themes related to reconciliation between national identity and the broader Islamic identity, with the historical and cultural commonalities shared by the peoples and nations of the Islamic world.

It is worth noting that the ongoing cooperation between the OIC General Secretariat and the Gulf Research Center in Saudi Arabia is aligned with the ministerial resolutions related to cultural affairs. This col-

laboration is also taking place as part of the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the two parties on March 27, 2024, which involves organizing joint cultural activities, programs, and events.

The Symposium saw the participation of representatives from Member States, observer countries, relevant OIC institutions and bodies, and prominent thinkers and intellectuals from the Islamic world.

On December 4, 2024, the OIC General Secretariat took part in the 8th meeting of the International Committee for the Preservation of Human Historical Heritage, held at the headquarters of the League of Arab States under the title: "Documenting Arab Cultural Heritage". The meeting addressed the endangered cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, in the Member States, and the ways to protect and preserve this heritage, which is of great interest to the OIC Member States and reflects their commitment in this regard.

Addressing the session devoted to the efforts of international regional organizations, the representative of the OIC General Secretariat, Dr. Rami Inshasi, reviewed the efforts made by the OIC and its relevant institutions in preserving cultural heritage. For his part,

Mr. Adeb Salim, from the General Secretariat's Al-Quds and Palestine Affairs Department, highlighted the catastrophic situation of cultural heritage in Palestine, especially amid the painful events currently taking place in Palestine.

On the other hand, in response to the invitation extended to H.E. Mr. Houssein Ibrahim Taha, OIC Secretary-General, by Mr. Brahim Fassi Fihri, President of the Amadeus Institute and Founder of the MEDays Forum, the OIC General Secretariat participated in the MEDays Forum held in Tangier, Morocco, on November 27-30, 2024.

Representing the OIC Secretary-General, the Director-General for Political Affairs at the General Secretariat, Amb. Mohamed Salah Tekaya, addressed the Panel Session entitled: "Promoting Sovereignty, Security, Governance, and Economic Resilience in Africa". He highlighted the special attention that the OIC attaches to the African Continent and to the issues of peace, security, and development therein, as well as to the multiple challenges faced by the Sahel and Lake Chad region. He recalled the decisions and resolutions adopted, in this regard, by the Islamic Summit and the Council of Foreign Ministers.

Uzbekistan's Sacred Heritage: The Story of the Katta Langar Qur'an

The "Katta Langar Qur'an", housed in the library of Uzbekistan's Muslim Board, stands as one of the world's oldest and most remarkable manuscript works. Its name derives from its historical home at the Langar Ota Mosque in Uzbekistan's Kashkadarya region, where for generations, representatives of the Ishaqiya order, known as the "Katta Langar Sheikhs," safeguarded its pages. Scholars date this manuscript to the last quarter of the 8th century, coinciding with the formative period of Arabic grammar. Currently, 81 pages reside in the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences in Saint Petersburg. According to the book "On Arabic Manuscripts" by Ignaty Krachkovsky, this manuscript was acquired mysteriously from an elderly woman in 1936.

The manuscript's significance gained international attention in 1998 when Russian Professor Efim Rezvan published "The Qur'an and its World", highlighting a manuscript stored under inventory number E 20 at the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts. Shortly after, French orientalist François Déroche sent a letter to Saint Petersburg, sharing photostat copies of Qur'an pages discovered in the Katta Langar village of Uzbekistan. These pages displayed a script and style identical to the E 20 manuscript.

Subsequently, Efim Rezvan learned that fragments of this manuscript were also preserved in Katta Langar, Tashkent, and Bukhara. In 1999, an academic expedition to Uzbekistan was organized, bringing together a group of orientalist scholars. The team examined the Usman Mushaf and a page of the Langar Qur'an at the library of the Uzbekistan Muslim Board in Tashkent, another page at the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, and twelve additional pages at the Langar Ota Mosques. A documentary titled "In the Footsteps of the Usman Qur'an" was produced to chronicle this significant endeavor.

Modern scientific analysis has provided compelling evidence of the manuscript's antiquity. In 2000, radiocarbon dating conducted by Russian and Dutch scientists at the University of Groningen's Isotope Research Center dated the parchment to between 775 and 995 AD, supporting scholars' attribution to the late 8th century.



By: Sheikh Nuriddin Kholiqnazar,
Chairman of the Muslims' Religious
Directorate of Uzbekistan, Mufti;

In Uzbekistan today, 16 pages of this remarkable manuscript survive. One page, containing verses 26-61 of Surah Al-Baqarah, is preserved at the Abu Rayhan al-Biruni Institute of Oriental Manuscripts. Two pages reside in Bukhara: one at the Ibn Sina Provincial Library and another at the Ark Manuscript Museum, featuring text from Surah Al-Mujadila to Surah Al-Hashr. The Uzbek Muslim Board's library holds 13 pages, including 12 brought from the Langar Ota mosque in 2003.

The manuscript's physical characteristics are remarkable. Written on polished parchment, each page measures approximately 53x35 cm. The text appears in Kufic-Hijazi script, among the earliest forms of Arabic calligraphy. Its leather binding, dating to the 14th century and restored in the 17th century, was strengthened using Arabic text-bearing papers.

Over centuries, the manuscript underwent various preservation efforts, including repairs and decorative additions. Damaged corners received patches with verses rewritten in Naskh script, and decorative elements were added between surahs. The surviving pages contain two Juz' of the Quran, suggesting the complete manuscript originally comprised 190-200 pages. Today, only 97 pages—47 percent of the estimated total—remain.

Recent preservation efforts have brought new life to this ancient treasure. Under President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev's initiative, the manuscript underwent extensive restoration between 2019 and 2021. This meticulous process, conducted by restorers from France's Louvre Museum alongside local experts, removed centuries of accumulated damage and deterioration. In 2022, two pages were showcased at a Paris exhibition celebrating Uzbekistan's cultural heritage.

The Katta Langar Qur'an represents more than just an ancient manuscript; it stands as a testament to Islamic scholarship and cultural preservation. Its significance extends beyond Uzbekistan's borders, serving as a spiritual and historical treasure for humanity. As we continue to study and preserve this remarkable artifact, it bridges centuries of Islamic tradition with modern scholarship and conservation techniques.



4th Meeting to Discuss Draft OIC Jeddah Convention on the Rights of the Child

The Fourth Meeting of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts was held at the headquarters of the OIC General Secretariat in Jeddah, on November 5, 2024, to complete the discussion of the draft "OIC Jeddah Convention on the Rights of the Child".

Addressing the meeting, the Director-General of the Department of Cultural and Family Affairs, Dr. Amina Obaid Al-Hajri, noted that the meeting is being held amid difficult and harsh circumstances witnessed by the Islamic world, due to the blatant and unprecedented Israeli aggression in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the heinous massacres committed by the Israeli occupation forces against civilians in the Gaza Strip, which led to the martyrdom of hundreds of innocent civilians and the wounding of thousands, most of whom are children, women and elderly persons.

Dr. Al-Hajri reiterated the condemnation of the OIC and Member States of the ongoing attacks by the brutal occupation forces, urging the international community to promptly deliver urgent humanitarian, medical, and relief assistance, provide water and electricity, and open safe humanitarian corridors immediately to deliver urgent assistance to the Gaza Strip.

Dr. Al-Hajri stated that the noble Islamic religion has given great attention to children's rights, as they are the future of the Ummah

and the youth of tomorrow. She urged the adoption of the "OIC Jeddah Convention on the Rights of the Child" as an international charter that emulates international human rights instruments, and is aligned with the teachings of the Islamic religion and the provisions of international Statutes and Charters.

Dr. Al-Hajri started her statement by expressing thanks to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the host country, for its continuous support to the OIC. She extended thanks to the Republic of Cameroon, Chair of the 50th session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers, and the Arab Republic of Egypt, Chair of the second session of the Ministerial Conference on Social Development, for their efforts and continuous support to the OIC.

On another note, on the occasion of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, observed on December 3 of each year pursuant to a resolution of the United Nations General Assembly adopted in 1992, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, underlined the importance of integrating persons with disabilities into all areas of social, cultural and economic life, and enhancing their leadership to ensure a better and sustainable future and promote the well-being of societies.

The OIC Secretary-General pointed out that

the relevant resolutions adopted by the 15th Islamic Summit, held in May 2024 in Banjul, Gambia, by the 50th session of the Council of Foreign Ministers, held in August 2024 in Yaoundé, Cameroon, and by the Second Session of the Ministerial Conference on Social Development, held in June 2023 in Cairo, Egypt, along with the OIC Strategy on Persons with Disabilities adopted by this latter Conference, all sought to improve the quality of services and activities provided to persons with disabilities, and called on Member States to share experiences and best practices in the integration and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities.

The theme chosen by the United Nations to commemorate the 2024 International Day of Persons with Disabilities is "Amplifying the leadership of persons with disabilities for an inclusive and sustainable future".

The Secretary-General called on Member States and the international community to join efforts to integrate and involve persons with disabilities in social life and enhance their capabilities to be able to face various challenges, thereby building societies in which equal opportunities prevail among all generations. He also urged the relevant bodies and institutions of the OIC and partner institutions to support the efforts of Member States in this regard.



OIC and US Department of State Secretary's Office for Global Women Sign MoU



The OIC General Secretariat issued a Statement to the international community on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (November 25). The Statement indicated that this day serves as a reminder of the ongoing suffering endured by women and girls who experience violence and abuse in all parts of the world, particularly in conflict zones, where women and girls are still among the most vulnerable members of society. The statement noted that this year's theme, "Investing to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls! #No_Excuse," stresses the pressing need for funding and proactive measures to prevent violence and protect women and girls worldwide. The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Houssein Brahim Taha, reaffirmed the OIC's commitment to addressing violence against women and empowering them across all Member States. This day, he added, is an opportunity to highlight the OIC's continuous efforts to support governments, international organizations, and CSOs in developing policies and strategies to combat violence against women in a firm and comprehensive manner. The Statement further noted that this day is being observed while the world witnesses continued violation and abuse of women's

rights and various forms of violence against them, especially in conflict areas. Women in conflict-affected regions, such as Palestine, Lebanon, the Sahel region, Afghanistan, and the Rohingya refugee camps, face severe violence, including abuse, forced marriages, and restrictions on their rights. The Statement added that such violence exacerbates the entrenched gender inequality and instability, leading to sustained psychological trauma and social exclusion. The suffering of those women highlights the urgent need for both local and global action to end gender-based violence. The Secretary-General took this opportunity to reiterate the OIC's strongest condemnation of the ongoing gender-based violence against women worldwide, and called for collective global efforts to put an end to these violations and practices against women. The OIC's commitment to empowering women is reflected through various initiatives, including the adoption of the OIC Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women (OPAAW), the establishment of the Cairo-based Women Development Organization, the formation of the OIC Women's Consultative Council, the advisory body for the OIC Conference of Ministers in charge

of Women, and the implementation of the relevant resolutions issued by the Islamic Summit Conferences, the CFM meetings, and the Conference of Ministers in charge of Women. On October 1, 2024, the OIC and the U.S. Department of State Secretary's Office for Global Women's Issues (S/GWI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding in Washington DC. The MoU was signed by Amb. Tarig Ali Bakheet, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian, Cultural and Social Affairs, and Ms. Rao Gupta, Ambassador-at-Large for the Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues. This partnership formalizes a mutual commitment to strengthening collaboration on initiatives designed to enhance the rights and opportunities for women and girls. The MoU focuses on such areas as women's economic empowerment, education, leadership skill development, combating gender-based violence, and promoting health and social rights. The MoU underscores the potential of international partnerships in bringing about inclusive, sustainable change. It aims to serve as a model for future global efforts in advancing women's rights and empowerment.

OIC Discusses New Statute of Humanitarian Funds

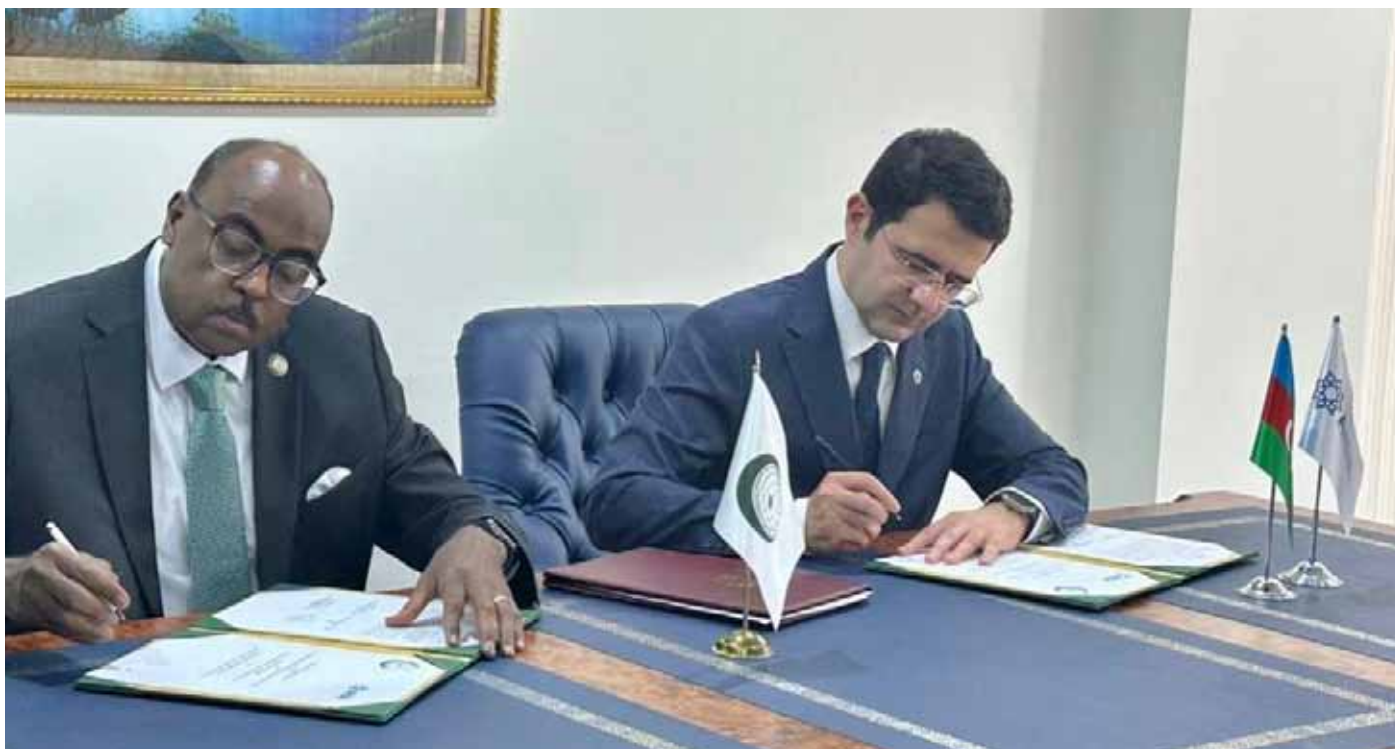


The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, addressed the meeting of the Open-Ended Governmental Expert Group to discuss the draft Statute of the OIC humanitarian funds, held on November 14, 2024, at the OIC General Secretariat in Jeddah. The Secretary-General noted that some OIC Member States have been suffering, especially in recent decades, from the consequences of armed conflicts, climate change, natural disasters, and epidemics. These are major factors that cause long-term humanitarian suffering, particularly for refugees and displaced persons, and destroy the livelihoods of the poor and vulnerable. He pointed out that the development gains accumulated over many years are now at risk of being lost, as these humanitarian crises have produced unprecedented levels of displacement and refugee situations, in the absence of permanent solutions. Some OIC Member States now produce more than half of the world's refugees while simultaneously hosting more than half of the world's refugees and IDPs. The consequence is an ever-growing demand for satisfying basic needs and meeting the requirements for rehabili-

tation, reconstruction, and recovery, amid scarce humanitarian response resources. The Secretary-General added that the meeting took place amid difficult and harsh humanitarian conditions, requiring collective efforts and joint action to help contain these crises and humanitarian plights. He underlined the need to make every possible effort to finalize the Statute of these Funds and introduce the necessary reforms into their operational mechanisms, while ensuring they are supported with the requisite financial resources, so that they can fulfill their role in serving the OIC's humanitarian agenda. The Secretary-General indicated that the Funds were established in accordance with the OIC Charter and pursuant to resolutions issued by the Council of Foreign Ministers. The Humanitarian Funds (Bosnia and Herzegovina Fund 2001, Afghanistan Fund 2001, and Sierra Leone Fund 2001, in addition to the Emergency Assistance Window) serve as humanitarian mechanisms. Each Fund was created within a specific historical, humanitarian, and political context, in order to provide humanitarian and relief support to Member States suffering from protracted

wars, internal conflicts, and disasters, as well as to assist in the return of refugees to their countries and in reconstruction efforts. It is worth recalling that the Council of Foreign Ministers had issued several resolutions calling for unifying these Funds, including Resolution 1/42-ICHAD adopted by the 42nd session Council of Foreign Ministers held in Kuwait in 2015. Paragraph 22 of this Resolution reads as follows: "[The Forty-second Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers] welcomes the agreement between the OIC and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Qatar on hosting the headquarters of the Funds operating in Afghanistan, Bosnia Herzegovina, and Sierra Leone. It welcomes the effort of the General Secretariat to reform and restructure the OIC Funds in cooperation with the head of the Funds and their governing bodies and combining all the funds under one fund with windows for different countries and devising a window for emergency assistance to enable the General Secretariat and its humanitarian implementing partners to provide timely life-saving response, and immediate recovery to populations affected by disasters.

OIC Acts to Mobilize Humanitarian Efforts at Islamic and Global Levels



As part of his sustained activities in the humanitarian sphere, Amb Tarig Ali Bakheet, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian, Social and Cultural Affairs, signed with H.E. Mr. Elmaddin Mehdiyev, Director of the Azerbaijan International Development Agency (AIDA), a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on development projects and humanitarian assistance in the OIC Member States. This MoU, signed on December 8, 2024, at the OIC headquarters in Jeddah, marks a further step in strengthening the fruitful and active cooperation between the OIC and the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Under this MoU, significant joint programs will be implemented, including humanitarian aid activities for needy OIC countries and capacity-building sessions, among other activities.

The OIC Assistant Secretary-General and the Director of AIDA took this opportunity to discuss a wide range of issues of common interest, and to exchange views on the optimum ways and means to ensure a smooth and efficient implementation of the MoU.

On October 1, 2024, a delegation from the OIC General Secretariat, led by Ambassador Tarig Ali Bakheet, held bilateral consultations with officials from the United States

Agency for International Development (USAID), headed by Ms. Sonali Cordy, Assistant Director-General of the Agency, at USAID headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Both sides exchanged views on ways and means to strengthen their bilateral partnership and cooperation within the framework of the MoU signed in 2012 and renewed in 2016. The MoU involves joint consultations and strategic dialogue, sharing of information, participation in disaster response, as well as training and operational support. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to boosting cooperation in the field of humanitarian assistance and their adherence to humanitarian principles.

It is worth recalling that several resolutions issued by the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers, including the recent Resolution on Humanitarian Affairs adopted at the 50th session held in Yaoundé, Cameroon, on 29-30 August 2024, called on the OIC General Secretariat to pursue efforts toward further developing the capacities of humanitarian CSOs in the OIC countries, through its joint program with USAID.

On October 26, 2024, Amb. Tarig Ali Bakheet held a meeting with H.E. Ms. Nandy SOME/Diallo, Minister of Humanitarian Ac-

tion and National Solidarity of Burkina Faso, and Ms. KABRE/KABORE BEBEGNASGNAN Stella Eldine, Minister-Delegate for Regional Cooperation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso, on the sidelines of the OIC Donors' Conference to Support Refugees and Displaced Persons in the Sahel and Lake Chad Region, held at the headquarters of the OIC General Secretariat.

Both sides reviewed the efforts made by Burkina Faso in the field of humanitarian action, and discussed ways to enhance the OIC and its relevant institutions' support to the Sahel countries in this field, especially to refugees and displaced persons.

On the sidelines of the Donors' Conference, Amb. Bakheet received Mr. Patrick Youssef, Regional Director for Africa of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Discussions focused on the Donors' Conference and the ways and means to further promote OIC-ICRC cooperation.

On December 5th, 2025, the OIC General Secretariat joined the international community in celebrating the International Volunteer Day, and reaffirmed its commitment to volunteer action to enhance services and promote solidarity as a deeply rooted principle in Islam.



Doha hosts 2nd Meeting of the OIC Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities

The Second Ministerial Meeting of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities in OIC Member States was held on November 27, 2024 in Doha, Qatar. The meeting was attended by Ministers and heads of anti-corruption law enforcement authorities from OIC Member States.

Addressing the meeting, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, referred to the outcomes of the 50th OIC Council of Foreign Ministers, held in Yaoundé, Cameroon, which urged Member States to join global anti-corruption efforts by signing and ratifying the Makkah Al Mukarramah Convention. He emphasized that the decision to hold this Ministerial Meeting of Anti-corruption Law Enforcement Authorities every two years reflects the Member States' shared willingness to enhance intra-OIC cooperation in this regard. This decision also bears witness to the OIC countries' commitment to combating corruption and other related crimes. He reiterated his call on Member States to accelerate the process of signing and ratifying the Makkah Al Mukarramah Convention, being a crucial mechanism to boost cooperation, transparency, and integrity.

The meeting was also addressed by H.E. Mr. Mazin bin Ibrahim Al-Kahmous, Presi-

dent of the Oversight and Anti-Corruption Authority of Saudi Arabia, Chair of the First Ministerial Meeting of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities in OIC Member States. He expressed his sincere thanks and gratitude to the State of Qatar for hosting the Second Ministerial Meeting and for its significant efforts in organizing this event. He also touched upon Saudi Arabia's hosting of several joint summits and other international events, which addressed the aggressions and violations against Palestine and Lebanon. He highlighted the efforts made by Saudi Arabia as Chair of the First Ministerial Meeting, which culminated in the adoption of the Makkah Al Mukarramah Convention on Anti-corruption Law Enforcement Cooperation.

Mr. Al-Kahmous highlighted the challenges facing Member States in fighting corruption and measuring its levels, considering the meeting as an excellent opportunity for the OIC Countries to enhance joint action and to reaffirm their commitment to the outcomes of the First Ministerial Meeting. Foremost among these outcomes was the Makkah Al Mukarramah Convention, the cornerstone of the OIC anti-corruption system. He referred to the Resolution issued by the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers at its 50th session held on August

29-30, 2024, in Yaoundé, Cameroon, which urged Member States to accelerate the process of signing the Convention, a historic step in promoting cooperation, transparency, and integrity.

Mr. Al-Kahmous commended the initiative proposed by Saudi Arabia and the Maldives to hold an international forum on "Promoting Integrity in the Tourism Sector", scheduled for 2025 in the Maldives, which aims to address modern methods and loopholes exploited by the perpetrators of corruption crimes in the tourism sector. He urged Member States to actively participate in this event in order to intensify intra-OIC cooperation in this regard.

For his part, H.E. Mr. Hamad bin Nasser Al-Misnad, President of the Administrative Control and Transparency Authority of the State of Qatar, Chair of the current session of the Ministerial Meeting on Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities in the OIC Member States, highlighted Qatar's achievements in terms of regulation and legislation to promote transparency and integrity, and to enhance anti-corruption mechanisms. He commended the participatory approach adopted by Qatar, reflecting its commitment to joining global efforts to combat corruption, organized crime, money laundering, and other related crimes.



21 OIC Member States Sign Makkah Al Mukarramah Convention

During the Second Ministerial Meeting of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities of OIC Member States, hosted by the State of Qatar in Doha 21 OIC Member States signed, on November 27, 2024, the Makkah Al Mukarramah Convention on Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Cooperation.

The signing of the Convention by 21 Member States, all on the same day, marks a historic event that will speed up the process of ratifying the Convention and bringing it into effect. It also reflects the Member States' awareness of the dangers of corruption and other crimes associated with it, as well as their commitment to enhancing anti-corruption cooperation.

In this regard, the General Secretariat urged other Member States to join in signing and ratifying the Convention, given its importance in providing a framework for cooperation to counter this serious scourge. It also urged them to sign and ratify other agreements and statutes so that the OIC can expand the scope of cooperation to include all Member States across all fields.

The Senior Officials Meeting Preparatory to the Second Ministerial Meeting of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities of OIC Member States was held on November 26, 2024, in Doha, Qatar.

The meeting began with a statement by Mr. Nasser Abaalkhail, President for International Cooperation at the Saudi Arabia Oversight and Anti-Corruption Authority, representing the Chair of the First Ministerial Meeting of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities in OIC Member States, held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. He highlighted the efforts made by Saudi Arabia as Chair of the First Ministerial Meeting, which culminated in the adoption of the Makkah Al-Mukarramah Convention on Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Cooperation.

The meeting was also addressed by the representative of the State of Qatar, Ms. Amal Al-Kuwari, Director of the Control and Development Department at the Administrative Control and Transparency Authority of Qatar, Chair of the Second Ministerial Meeting of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities in OIC Member States. Ms. Al-Kuwari welcomed all participants, and noted that this event represents a significant step towards enhancing cooperation among OIC Member States and supporting joint efforts so that the Makkah Al Mukarramah Convention comes into effect, given its importance in promoting integrity and combating corruption at regional and international levels. She affirmed that the State of Qatar places great importance

on combating and preventing corruption, through advanced initiatives, legislations, and programs. Foremost among these is the Emir of the State of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani Anti-Corruption Excellence Award, a global initiative designed to honor outstanding efforts in this field. She also expressed confidence that this Meeting would serve as a fruitful platform for sharing ideas and experiences, thus contributing to strengthening joint efforts. She commended all participants for their engagement and contributions, wishing them a successful and fruitful meeting.

For his part, Mr. Youssef Al-Dobeay, OIC Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, representing H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, OIC Secretary-General, expressed gratitude to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for its efforts as Chair of the First Ministerial Meeting, which culminated in the adoption of the Makkah Al Mukarramah Convention.

He also extended thanks to the State of Qatar for hosting the Second Ministerial Meeting, and reviewed the General Secretariat's ongoing efforts to urge Member States to sign and ratify the Convention, as well as the technical support it has provided to facilitate its entry into force.

Secretary-General at 40th COMCEC Calls for Fostering Agricultural Cooperation among Member States



The President of the Republic of Türkiye, H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, in his capacity as Chairman of the OIC Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation (COMCEC), inaugurated, on November 4, 2024, in Istanbul the 40th Ministerial Session of the COMCEC.

Addressing the opening session, the Turkish President drew attention to the ongoing genocidal situation in Palestine and Lebanon, indicating that one of the most powerful responses to the Israeli aggression against Gaza and Lebanon would be for more States to officially recognize the State of Palestine. In this context, he called for an immediate ceasefire and for allowing the delivery of humanitarian aid to the Palestinian people in Gaza. He highlighted the need for the Islamic world to set aside differences and stand united in support of the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples in their legitimate struggle against the Israeli occupation.

Touching on the global economic situation, President Erdoğan called for enhanc-

ing and deepening the existing cooperation and coordination among Member States. By strengthening cooperation and sharing innovative solutions, Member States can address shared challenges, ultimately enhancing economic resilience and driving sustainable growth across the OIC countries.

The opening session was also addressed by the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, who emphasized the vital role of COMCEC in fostering economic cooperation among Member States. Speaking about the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, the Secretary-General condemned in the strongest terms the ongoing Israeli aggression and genocide against the Palestinian people, and called for urgent international intervention to protect civilians and restore peace.

While outlining the various OIC initiatives towards consolidating socio-economic cooperation among the Member States in addressing development challenges, the Secretary-General highlighted significant progress in trade exchanges among OIC

countries, and stressed the importance of effective implementation of trade programs and projects to achieve the 25% intra-OIC trade target by 2025.

The Secretary-General also underlined the need to further enhance intra-OIC cooperation in the food and agriculture sector, with a focus on supporting rural people in the least developed OIC Countries. He stressed the need for greater cooperation and collaboration among all OIC Member States and institutions to achieve the lofty objectives for which the OIC was established.

The Ministerial Session reviewed the state of implementation of various OIC projects in the areas of trade and investment, agriculture, tourism, finance, private sector, and poverty alleviation, among others. The Session concluded its work on November 5, 2024.

COMCEC meets annually to review OIC activities in the economic and trade fields.

Hissein Taha: Harmonizing Halal Standards is Instrumental in Increasing Intra-OIC Trade

The 19th General Assembly Meeting of the Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC) was held on November 13, 2024, in Istanbul, Türkiye.

Mr. Naghi Jabbarov, Director-General of the Department of Economic Affairs, delivered the message of the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha at the opening session. In his Message, the Secretary-General commended SMIIC for its continued commitment to promoting OIC trade activities through Halal standards and the harmonization of Halal within OIC Member States, in addition to the organization of various Halal expos and events.

The Secretary-General stressed that SMIIC plays a significant role in providing a platform to store the database for Halal standards, serving as a reference for Member States under the SMIIC Information System and SMIIC website. He called on all members of the SMIIC General Assembly to popularize the Green Halal concept in the OIC Member States.

The 19th General Assembly Meeting elected new members of the Board of Directors for the period 2025-2027 and re-elected H.E. Ihsan Ovut as Secretary-General of SMIIC for the same period. The Meeting also reviewed SMIIC's report regarding the implementation of various resolutions and programs of activities for 2024, and approved the SMIIC's Work Program and Budget for 2025.

In the same context, the 10th edition of

the World Halal Summit and the Halal Expo 2024 were held in Istanbul, Türkiye, on November 27-30, 2024. This event involved trade promotion activities showcasing products and services that comply with the Halal production rules of Islamic law.

In his mes-

sage to

Countries (SMIIC) and the Islamic Center for Development of Trade (ICDT) for their constant commitment to promoting Halal trade activities through establishing Halal standards, harmonizing Halal across the OIC Member States, as well as organizing various Halal expos and events.

The Secretary-General stressed that the Halal industry has made a lasting impact by fostering international collaboration, showcasing innovation, and driving economic growth within the OIC Countries. He called on all Member States to popularize the Green Halal concept, and prioritize strategies that promote collaboration and inclusiveness in the Halal sector.

The Secretary-General's message was read out by Mrs. Farha Ramadan, Professional Officer at the Department of Economic Affairs at the OIC.

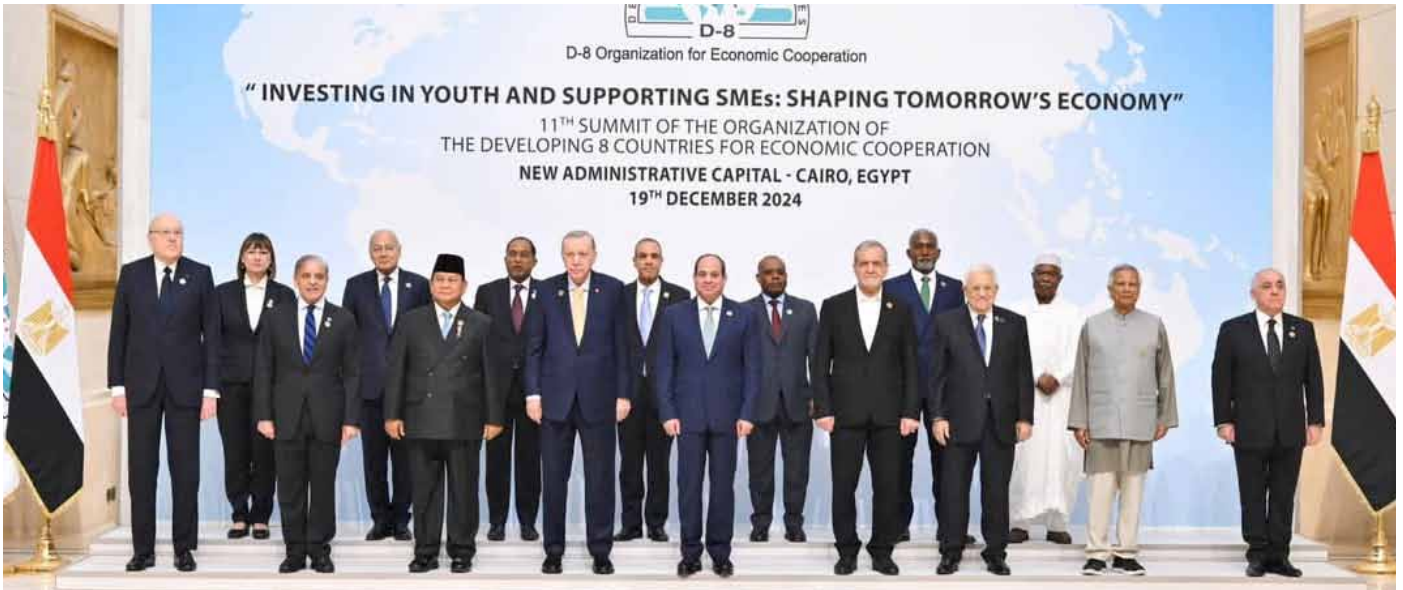
As an annual platform for Halal industry experts, traders, and entrepreneurs from both OIC and non-OIC countries, the Halal Summit and Expo offer a comprehensive overview of a wide range of Halal-certified goods. Exhibitions range from food products to cosmetics, fashion, financial services, and educational institutions.

The 10th edition of the World Halal Summit featured panel discussions during which industry experts addressed the latest trends and shared knowledge on various aspects of the Halal industry.



the opening session of the Summit, the Secretary-General congratulated the organizers on their remarkable achievements in successfully hosting this prestigious annual event for a decade. He commended the Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic

OIC Secretary-General Participates in D-8 Summit in Cairo



The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Houssein Brahim Taha, took part in the 11th D-8 Summit. In his address to the Summit, he expressed gratitude to H.E. President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, for extending an invitation to the OIC to be present at this significant event. He emphasized that the timing of this Summit is particularly critical as the global community is grappling with multifaceted challenges. This underscores the urgent need for enhanced economic inter-State cooperation at all levels, especially in terms of economic development.

The Secretary-General noted that the current ever-accelerating challenges and transformations require a more enhanced cooperation and coordination between the D-8 Group and the OIC along with its various organs. During the session devoted to the situation in Palestine and Lebanon, the Secretary-General reaffirmed the OIC's unwavering support for both countries. He called for a cessation of the Israeli aggression on Gaza and Lebanon, as well as for the cessation of the Israeli attacks on UNRWA personnel and facilities. He urged for increased support to UNRWA so that it can deliver humanitarian relief to displaced Palestinian people.

The Secretary-General underlined the need for the international community to bolster its solidarity and support in response to the escalating humanitarian crises in the Gaza Strip. He reiterated the OIC's call for an im-

mediate, permanent, and comprehensive ceasefire while demanding an end to all Israeli violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif. He urged the global community to act for halting the ongoing Israeli aggression, putting an end to settlement activities and to the occupation of the Palestinian Territory, and establishing the independent State of Palestine on the borders of June 4, 1967, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

On the other hand, in his address to the 13th session of the OIC Statistical Commission (OIC-StatCom), held in Ankara, Türkiye, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Houssein Brahim Taha, noted that statistics are vital for informed decision-making on policy issues and for evaluating the impact of social and economic policies. He commended the Commission for its efforts in bringing together chief statisticians from OIC Member States to develop an action plan to improve the production and dissemination of vital and reliable statistics about OIC Member States.

The Secretary-General's message was delivered on his behalf by Dr. Ahmad Kawesa Sengendo, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Affairs.

During the 13th session, the OIC-StatCom reviewed the activities undertaken since the latest session held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, in October 2023. It also discussed the implementation of the OIC-StatCom Program of Action for 2021-2025, and the issues related

to inclusive data collection in the field of social protection, ethics for new data sources and technologies, monitoring and reporting on SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) indicators, machine learning and artificial intelligence in official statistics, and the 2020 Round of the World Population and Housing Census Program.

The Expert Group tasked with examining the establishment of a permanent mechanism for the settlement of disputes arising from the OIC Agreement for the Promotion, Protection and Guarantee of Investment held its third meeting on October 8, 2024, in Istanbul, Türkiye.

During the opening session of the meeting, Amb. Dr. Hassan Ali, Director of Legal Affairs, delivered a speech on behalf of the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Houssein Brahim Taha, in which he reviewed the rapid developments in the field of international investment and the need to keep pace with these developments within the framework of the OIC, through establishing a mechanism for settling investment disputes. He highlighted the importance of moving forward with a comprehensive review of the Agreement on the Promotion and Protection of Investment, based on the proposal of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia that calls for updating the Agreement, which dates back to 1981, so that it can be instrumental in achieving the OIC objectives in terms of enhancing intra-OIC economic cooperation.

Literary Figures and Intellectuals in Sharjah for “The Written Word”



Every November, the city of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates becomes a destination for hundreds of thousands of lovers of the “written word”, writers, men of letters, and intellectuals from around the world. During this month, the Sharjah International Book Fair is held, now in its 43rd edition, celebrating its position as the world’s largest book fair, for the fourth year in a row, in terms of buying and selling of copyrights.

Over the course of four decades, the Fair has become a leading platform for enhancing cultural and intellectual exchange worldwide. It serves as a cultural and literary celebration that allows book enthusiasts to explore and purchase millions of books at special prices, with each edition seeing sales surpassing 50 million dollars.

The Fair provides a vibrant environment that brings together diverse literary productions from around the globe. It features notable events, including book signings, discussion panels, and workshops, with vast spaces available for showcasing new publications. The Fair also serves as a meeting point for authors and publishers from around the world, with sessions to discuss current trends in the publishing industry and explore possibilities for mutual collaboration.

The Fair organizes various significant initia-

tives to support readers, including educational initiatives, a conference for publishers, awards for Emirati authors, along with the Best Arabic Novel Award, the Best International Book Award, the Sharjah Book Award, and the Best Publisher Award, all designed to encourage innovation in the publishing industry. The Fair also honors authors, writers, and publishers who have significantly contributed to enriching literature and culture.

Since its establishment by HH Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, the ruler of Sharjah, in 1982, the Sharjah International Book Fair has seen significant development in terms of its size, number of exhibitors, publishers, and cultural events and awards, and number of visitors, which has risen to over a million each year.

The Fair plays a crucial role in promoting reading and spreading knowledge across all age groups, at a time when global culture is shifting toward digital media. By providing hundreds of thousands of books across various categories, the Fair caters to readers’ needs in literature, thought, science, technology, and arts. It also strengthens cultural exchange between countries, contributing to Sharjah’s vision of becoming a capital of culture and knowledge.

The interactive workshops and lectures or-

ganized by the Fair cover various topics, including literature, writing, design, and innovation. Prominent authors and novelists participate in these events, offering visitors a chance to benefit from their expertise.

The Fair is also an opportunity for authors and writers to meet their readers and sign copies of their books, thereby fostering direct communication between the author and the reader.

A large portion of the Fair’s activities is dedicated to children, with educational workshops and recreational activities designed to encourage reading and develop their intellectual and creative skills. This program helps instill a passion for reading in the younger generation.

Alongside its cultural role, the Sharjah International Book Fair plays a significant economic role, by boosting the publishing industry and stimulating the knowledge economy through increasing sales and promoting books. It also supports publishers, bookstores, and authors by providing a platform to showcase and sell their products to a wide audience.

Hundreds of publishers from around the world, ranging from large to small, take part in the Fair, thereby enhancing cultural exchange between countries.

Nigeria Launches Project to Boost Broadband Infrastructure



Digital infrastructure provider WIOCC announced that it is partnering with Nigeria's state-owned ICT and shared services provider Galaxy Backbone Limited (GBB) to boost broadband infrastructure in Nigeria. The partnership aims to combine WIOCC's wholesale fiber network and expertise with GBB's national fiber footprint to improve scalability, efficiency, and service delivery for businesses and government institutions. GBB currently owns and operates a 1,482-km optical fiber backbone from Abuja across 13 states in Nigeria.

WIOCC and GBB also plan to expand broadband access to underserved regions, and establish partnerships with mobile network operators (MNOs). Both WIOCC and GBB are pitching the partnership as a way to drive growth in Nigeria's digital ecosystem and boost digital inclusion in the country.

The partnership focuses on enhancing stakeholder engagement by jointly reviewing and improving the National Policy on Telecommunications to meet digital economy needs. WIOCC Group commits to investing in Ni-

geria's digital infrastructure, deploying a hyperscale open-access digital platform for internet service providers (ISPs) with advanced fiber and colocation facilities. Additionally, through this partnership, the collaboration with the Nigerian Broadband Alliance for Nigeria aims to improve broadband quality and accessibility, with WIOCC expanding fiber infrastructure and partnering with ISPs to connect more homes and businesses. The partnership also includes WIOCC providing digital infrastructure training and supporting job creation for Nigerian youth.

The MoU with the Ministry of Communications underscores commitment to supporting Nigeria's digital transformation, by working together to create a robust digital ecosystem that benefits all stakeholders and drives sustainable economic growth.

"Our mission is to provide robust digital infrastructure that underpins Nigeria's digital economy," said Professor Ibrahim A. Adeyanju, MD and CEO of GBB. "This partnership with WIOCC is a testament to our commitment to enabling digital inclusion and

providing a platform for collaboration that transforms how businesses, governments, and communities operate in today's world." According to the GSMA's State of Mobile Internet Connectivity Report 2024, 120 million people in Nigeria remain unconnected to the internet.

The Nigerian government's National Broadband Plan, launched in 2020, aimed to achieve at least 70% broadband penetration by 2025. However, according to the latest figures released by the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), broadband subscriber numbers in Nigeria actually dropped this year from 94.3 million in March 2024 to 90.1 million at the end of September, for a penetration rate of 41.5%. That said, figures for October 2024 saw broadband numbers recover slightly to 91.57 million (42.2%).

For comparison, Nigeria's broadband penetration was 39.8% when the National Broadband Plan was launched almost five years ago.



Bagerhat: Ancient Islamic City in Bangladesh

The Bagerhat Regional Museum, established in 1994 by the Department of Archaeology of the Government of Bangladesh, plays an essential role as a site museum near the renowned Sixty-Domed Mosque (Shaith Gumbad Mosque) in Bagerhat, a UNESCO World Heritage site. This museum not only preserves the artifacts and architectural remnants of the medieval city of Khalifatabad, but also offers visitors an immersive glimpse into the cultural and historical heritage of the region.

The Bagerhat Museum was built to conserve, exhibit, and educate people about the historical and cultural legacy of the medieval city of Khalifatabad, now located in the modern-day Bagerhat district. The Sixty-Domed Mosque, the centerpiece of this ancient city, serves as the focal point around which the Museum is structured.

The Museum houses artifacts and materials uncovered during archaeological excavations in the surrounding mounds, including Khan I Jahan's residence, roadways, kitchen, and dining areas, which have provided insight into the daily lives and urban planning of the region's early inhabitants.

Bagerhat's archaeological significance is tied to the historical figure of Ulugh Khan I Jahan, an important Muslim ruler believed to be a provincial governor under the Delhi

Sultanate. After arriving in the area from Jessore, Khan I Jahan settled along the banks of the Bhairab River, which was crucial for trade and communication. His initial landing was in Barobazar, present-day Jhenaidah district, where he began his mission to spread Islam and establish a Muslim presence in the southern region of Bengal.

Khan I Jahan and his followers eventually moved to the Bagerhat area, where they built a vast number of religious and service structures. Historical sources suggest that up to 360 mosques, bridges, roads, water tanks, mausoleums, and other public buildings were constructed in the Bagerhat area, establishing it as a significant Muslim city in medieval Bengal. Key structures like the Bibi Begani Mosque, Singair Mosque, Chunakhola Mosque, and the Mausoleum of Khan I Jahan still stand as enduring symbols of his architectural vision.

The Bagerhat Museum is a thoughtfully designed, single-story building occupying an area of 520 square meters. Located southeast of the Sixty-Domed Mosque, the Museum is accessed through the Mosque's southern gateway. The building has a central hall surrounded by octagonal galleries, designed to harmonize with the Mosque's architecture and the regional aesthetic of Sultanate domes.

The Museum's galleries are home to a diverse array of artifacts and exhibits, each thoughtfully curated to reflect the history and material culture of Khalifatabad. The introductory gallery features a map of Bangladesh, highlighting archaeological sites with a special focus on the Bagerhat district and the city of Khalifatabad. Panels in Bengali and English provide visitors with contextual information, including a layout of the galleries and their contents.

The Museum features a model of the ancient city of Khalifatabad, which showcases the locations of mosques, tombs, and other significant structures, offering visitors a three-dimensional understanding of the medieval city's urban landscape. The first gallery displays artefacts such as terracotta plaques, stone and terracotta utensils, glazed tiles, and animal bones. These items, arranged in glass cases, shed light on the daily life, craftsmanship, and artistic expressions of the inhabitants of Khalifatabad.

The Museum also includes a photo gallery featuring images of Sultanate and Mughal period buildings, illustrating the evolution of architectural styles in the region. Noteworthy among the exhibits is a taxidermy of a crocodile that once lived in Thakur Dighi, a large tank near the Sixty-Domed Mosque.



Global Islamic Finance Assets Expected to Grow to Nearly \$6 trillion by 2026

Islamic finance is today a \$3.9 trillion industry spread over more than 80 countries, with the bulk of it concentrated in very few markets.

A number of Islamic countries are driving the growth of global Islamic finance, setting industry standards, and fostering innovation. Over the past decade, Islamic finance grew at an exponential yearly pace of around 10%. According to the 2023 State of Global Islamic Economy Report, total Sharia-compliant assets will grow to \$5.95 trillion by 2026, although that depends on the economic well-being of these countries' markets.

Islamic finance's primary sphere of influence is of course the Arab world, thanks to its Muslim-majority populations and the immense oil wealth. The MENA region (not including Iran) is home to over 190 Islamic banks.

The share of Islamic banking from total banking assets varies among Arab countries, with Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Djibouti, UAE, Jordan, Palestine, Oman, and Bahrain recording varying percentages.

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) dominates the world of Islamic finance with over 97% of the top 50 Arab Islamic banks' assets.

The region's 15 largest Islamic banks are all

GCC-based and accounted for nearly \$770 billion in assets in 2022. These banks sometimes branch out abroad (for instance, Bahrain's Bank "al Baraka" has offices in more than 15 countries). A milestone for the region was the finalization of Kuwait Finance House's acquisition of Bahrain's "Ahli United" Bank in late 2022. The \$8.8 billion created the second-largest Islamic bank in the world, with over \$120 billion in combined assets.

Islamic lenders had a 5.1% market share in Tunisia and 2.4% in Algeria where Islamic banks already existed. Egypt, North Africa's biggest market, issued its first Islamic bond in 2023. Sharia-compliant finance grew by 22% between 2022 and 2023, and represents about 4% of the local banking sector, according to the Egyptian Islamic Finance Association.

Today, the Asian-Pacific region represents almost 25% of the global Islamic finance market. In Malaysia, sharia-compliant institutions account for close to one-quarter of the financial sector. Kuala Lumpur is one of the main drivers of the global sukuk market, and weighs in on international compliance with the Islamic Financial Services Board, one of the world's two major Islamic finance regulatory bodies.

Other mature Asian Islamic finance markets include Bangladesh, Brunei, and Pakistan where sharia-compliant assets make up more than 15% of total bank assets.

Further West, Australia raised hopes of being the next market to open up to Islamic finance, but after the first Sharia-compliant lender obtained its license in 2022, it asked for it to be removed in 2024 for lack of capital. The Philippines also expressed interest in opening up to Islamic finance.

In other parts of the world such as Sub-Saharan Africa, Islamic finance is just beginning to take off. In March 2024, Uganda opened its first Sharia-compliant bank, a branch of the Djibouti-based Salaam Group.

At this stage, Islamic finance in Africa tends to spread through private or sovereign bonds rather than traditional banking services. African governments see Islamic finance as a tool to raise development funds on international markets and diversify their pool of investors. But so far, the results have been limited.

In Europe, London has positioned itself to become the hub for Sharia-compliant finance in the Western world. Today, the UK boasts 5 licensed Islamic banks, and over 20 conventional banks offering Islamic financial products.

World Hijab Day

February 1st



A Hijab Experience to Reject Discrimination and Hatred

People gathered in Des Moines, Iowa, to celebrate World Hijab Day and learn more about the Muslim practice and the history behind the hijab.

February 1st marks World Hijab Day, which celebrates Muslim women and the practice of covering their hair by wearing a hijab. Founded in 2013 by Nazma Khan, this day offers an opportunity to educate people about the practice of wearing a hijab and the significance it holds.

A celebration was held at the West Des Moines Library. Organizers say it helps combat religious discrimination and clears up misconceptions about the head covering. During the event, various booths shared information and provided presentations for people curious to learn more about the hijab.

Mais Homedan, a Masjid Sahabah representative, is proud to be sharing her religious traditions with others. "It definitely makes me really happy. I love it when people ask me questions and it's just great to see other people's views on what they know about Islam," said Homedan. "It's great, it's good to meet people and have a good conversation with them." The celebration came ahead of the holy month of Ramadan.

For Shreen Mahmood, in the UK, widening the discussion on wearing the hijab cannot come soon enough, after she faced discrimination and hatred for doing so. "Someone commented on one of my social media posts, saying I should be suffocated with my hijab. This really shocked me and upset my daughters," she said.

Ms. Mahmood is now using her experiences to launch a new podcast with the aim of creating a space for discussion, support, and education. She said the project was long overdue, despite the growing online conversations about identity and the choice to wear the religious attire.

Ms. Mahmood considered the podcast as necessary, being a safe space for women to speak about the challenges they face while wearing a hijab, which include discrimination and misconceptions. This comes as campaigners mark World Hijab Day to promote acceptance of the religious headwear.

According to the 2021 Census, 9.6% of people in the West Midlands identify as Muslim, compared to 6.7% in 2011. In Birmingham, the number rises to 29.9%.

While not all Muslim women wear the hijab, campaigners said these conversations were important in challenging stereotypes.

One of those involved in the project is TV chef Mia Dia who has a cookery show on the Islam Channel. She described how she was mocked and laughed at for wearing her headscarf. She said: "My hijab is more than just a piece of cloth. I remember one occasion when I shared my cookery clips on my Instagram account and someone said they can't learn from me when I've got that on my head".

Barbara, who tried on the hijab in support of those who were wearing it, said while she was shopping with a friend: "I have never worn a hijab before; it feels a bit strange but I don't think I've got it on right". "It's nice and it shouldn't be for one community but for everyone", she added.

Sue, whose grandson is Muslim, tried on a hijab for the first time during a city-center event, and said: "It's surprisingly very comfortable and keeps my ears warm. I think what these ladies are doing here today is excellent and a good way to increase understanding."

Ms. Mahmood said the response from the public had been encouraging, but more work is needed to tackle misunderstanding.



Opening up Job Opportunities for African Youth

Sub-Saharan Africa is undergoing a demographic transition of global proportion. By 2050, the region's population is set to grow from 1.5 billion in 2024 to 2.5 billion, with more than 600 million people joining the working-age population.

By then, one in three individuals aged 15-34 globally will be African, which provides an enormous opportunity for the Continent to reap the demographic dividend of higher economic growth propelled by an expanding population. This, however, can be achieved only if this expanding population can find productive employment opportunities.

In fact, while Sub-Saharan Africa needs to create 15 million jobs each year to keep up, its economies create far fewer and are often poorly remunerated. Today, many youths receive neither education nor training and employment.

Solving this challenge in Africa requires a multi-pronged strategy, including increased wage employment in small private-sector enterprises. Managed migration programs can also enhance productive labor mobility within countries and internationally, including migration towards fast-growing econo-

mies.

For young people to climb the ladder of opportunity, they must first get on it. Extreme poverty and food insecurity often prevent this initial step. Across Africa, social protection programs have proven effective in helping the poor onto the ladder by ensuring that food is on the table, children can access education and health services – key for building a strong workforce for tomorrow – and households can invest in productive assets like livestock or stands for street vending. Social protection also offers a safety net to those who fall off the ladder in the face of shocks like the COVID-19 pandemic or increasingly severe and frequent climate events.

Over the past two decades, Africa has pioneered “productive” social protection programs. These initiatives now go beyond income support, incorporating public works employment that promotes climate mitigation and resilience, engaging beneficiaries in entrepreneurship and life skills training, opening bank accounts, and promoting group savings schemes in addition to income support.

To support millions of aspiring workers, governments need to invest in robust systems. Digital social registries of poor and vulnerable households, underpinned by identification systems, are the platform for targeting support to those most in need.

Realizing Africa's demographic dividend by 2050 requires dynamic private-sector development to create productive jobs. For the private sector to invest and create jobs, reforms need to be prioritized to enhance the business environment, boost market access, attract investment, and improve trade as well as sector and firm performance.

At the same time, education and skill development systems must prepare the workforce for the demands of a growing formal private sector. While some of these reforms will take time to deliver results, scaling youth employment programs can deliver immediate results, helping millions onto the ladder of opportunity.

The urgency is real, but so is the opportunity. With the right investments and partnerships, Africa's youth can climb the ladder of opportunity, and drive the Continent toward a brighter future.



Senegal Increases Efforts to Supply the Entire Country with Electricity

Seated in her bedroom in Ndong Serere, a village located 100 kilometers from Senegal's Capital Dakar, Khady studies her natural science textbook under the steady glow of an electric lamp. She dreams of becoming a doctor, and the conditions around her now match her aspirations. Just weeks ago, the scene was starkly different – she had to ration her flashlight batteries carefully, limiting her study time each evening and often struggling to complete her homework before the batteries died completely.

"I can now study my lessons in better conditions at night". Khady attributes her recent academic progress not only to her teachers and her commitment but also to the arrival of reliable lighting. "Last year at this same time, I had a grade of 10 in natural sciences. This year, I have a grade of 17," she says with a proud smile.

Khady's story reflects Senegal's broader journey toward universal electricity access. The country has made significant strides, with a national access rate of 84% according to government sources. But the journey is far from over. While urban areas enjoy near-universal access, over 30% of rural communities remain disconnected from the grid.

For Ndong Serere, the arrival of electricity has been a catalyst for transformation.

Djaraf, a skilled carpenter, is one of the many who seized new opportunities. "I learned and practiced carpentry at 10 kilometers from Ndong Serere, but when electricity came to this locality, I didn't hesitate to return and open my first carpentry workshop," he explains. Beyond economic opportunities, electricity has restored dignity and improved quality of life.

Village elder Cheikh Diouf recalls past struggles: "When someone passed away, residents had to travel 10 kilometers to get ice to preserve the body while waiting for the deceased's family to come." Now such basic challenges are a thing of the past, as energy access has fundamentally reshaped the community's daily reality.

Senegal's commitment to universal electricity access is supported by innovative financing and strategic partnerships, including the Senegal Energy Access Scale-up Project with \$150 million in financing from the International Development Association (IDA). The project aims to build and rehabilitate nearly 4,000 kilometers of power lines. It will bring electricity to 200,000 households, electrify

600 health clinics and 200 schools, and ensure that 100% of distribution infrastructure is resilient to climate-related events.

A least-cost geospatial electrification plan is also in development to optimize efforts. Senegal's energy strategy prioritizes mobilizing \$2 billion in private investments. Recognizing that achieving universal access cannot rely solely on public resources, the approach leverages private-sector innovation and efficiency to meet ambitious targets.

The Government's vision for the sector goes beyond access to embrace sustainability. Exploiting its gas reserves, Senegal has embarked on an ambitious plan to convert its heavy fuel production to gas, and increase its renewable energy share to 40% of its generation mix by 2030, while expanding total generation capacity by 70%. This effort is part of the Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP), a global financing initiative through which Senegal partners with France, Germany, the European Union, the United Kingdom, and Canada to achieve universal energy access and develop a sustainable, low-carbon energy system by promoting renewable energy technologies.

OIC Participates in Kuwait Symposium on the International Islamic Court of Justice

At 24th Session of IPHRC: OIC Secretary-General Calls for Cooperation to Promote Human Rights

The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, addressed the opening ceremony of the 24th session of the Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC), held on November 24, 2024, at the OIC Headquarters in Jeddah. He welcomed all participants, and expressed his thanks to Ambassador Talal Al-Mutairi, Chairperson of the IPHRC, and to Professor Noura Al-Rashoud, Executive Director of the IPHRC, for their commitment and sound leadership. The Secretary-General highlighted the essential role of the IPHRC in promoting human rights, in line with the Islamic values. He welcomed the finalization of the "OIC Jeddah Convention on the Rights of the Child", and stressed the importance of this year's theme: "Access to Medical Care". He expressed concern over the situation endured by the Palestinians in Gaza, and called for international mobilization to end this humanitarian crisis. In conclusion, he expressed confidence that this meeting would yield fruitful outcomes and significant recommendations that would be taken into consideration by Member States and the relevant OIC Departments.

On October 23, 2024, Sheikh Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah Kuwait Diplomatic Institute of



the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Kuwait organized a Symposium entitled: "The International Islamic Court of Justice: Establishment and Statute", with the participation of the Kuwait Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the OIC General Secretariat. The Symposium addressed the idea of the Court's establishment that had emerged since the Third Islamic Summit Conference held in January 1981 in Makkah Al-Mukarramah, Saudi Arabia, as well as in the Fifth Islamic Summit Conference held in January 1987 in the State of Kuwait, the country that would serve as the headquarters of the Court. A series of resolutions were then ad-

opted to urge OIC Member States to expedite the process of signing and ratifying the Statute of the Court, so that it can effectively enter into force.

The Symposium highlighted the importance of the International Islamic Court of Justice, being a strategic step to enhance unity and strengthen legal and judicial cooperation among OIC Member States. It reviewed some articles of the Court's Statute that need to be signed and ratified by 38 countries, equivalent to two-thirds of the OIC Member States, so that the Court can become operational. To date, only 14 OIC Countries have already ratified the Statute.

Director-General of UNA Visits OIC



The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received, on November 24, 2024, in his office at the OIC General Secretariat in Jeddah, H.E. Mr. Muhammad bin Abd Rabbo Al-Yami, Director-General of the Union of OIC News Agencies (UNA).

Mr. Al-Yami expressed his gratitude to the OIC Secretary-General for his continued support for the Union. He offered a brief overview of the efforts undertaken by the Union to develop media work, as well as the media and cultural projects that the Union will implement in the coming period. He emphasized UNA's support for the media work of the OIC and all its institutions.

For his part, the Secretary-General thanked the Director-General of UNA and congratulated him on his reappointment to this position for a new term. He reaffirmed his support for the valuable efforts undertaken by this active media institution to strengthen media and cultural work, promote professional communication among OIC news agencies, and enhance the media visibility of the OIC and its programs and projects.

IPHRC's Efforts in Combating Deviant Sexual Orientations

The family is one of the oldest and most basic institutions that has managed to maintain its structure. It is the key societal institution entrusted with the responsibility of achieving social, spiritual, cultural, and educational goals, and serving economic functions. A strong family based on marriage between a man and a woman is indeed the main social institution responsible for transmitting the ethics, traditions, and values that underlie human civilization to future generations.

While cultures and religions have always attached great attention to the marriage institution as a union between a man and a woman, being a key factor for ensuring proper care for the family and for society at large, a small group of people within certain societies is challenging the longstanding and firmly established concepts of marriage and the family. This challenge has arisen under the pretext of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI), with attempts to redefine marriage to encompass "homosexual relationships", which constitutes a deviant vision of marriage, advocating what is now referred to as "alternative family forms."

The ongoing debate about enabling lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals to practice their lifestyle as "normal families", viewed as a human right, proves to be legally indefensible. This remains a highly controversial issue that should be addressed within the framework of existing human rights paradigms, which have now become a platform for attempts to redefine marriage.

If we do not stand against this tendency to re-define the traditional concept of man-woman marriage, and remain silent about the fallacies regarding "sexual orientation", there will be others who would demand, under the pretext of genetic predisposition, the legalization of incest, bestiality, and other forms of deviant sexual behavior and personal choices as an integral part of "human rights".

In recent years, advocates of "SOGI" have intensified their efforts, in collaboration with other sexual rights activists, to target youth, especially children, by exploiting deviant content under the cloak of comprehensive sexual education. Their goal is to lure the next generation into the trap of sexual orientation, and teach children "extremist sexual ideologies", pushing them to defend those issues as a right protected by law.

Countering this scourge actually imposes itself as a priority. In fact, the emerging SOGI approach and the harm it entails make it imperative for OIC Countries to strengthen their cooperation with other like-minded countries, communities, and entities, with a view to identifying possible responses from religious, legal, and human rights perspectives. This will help combat this challenge and create a favorable environment for developing policies that are protective of traditional family values. No doubt, these challenges require careful self-reflection to develop political, legal, and social strategies that can guide youth in OIC Countries.

In Islam, marriage, based on "Nikah", is a sacred religious contract between a man and a woman, entailing rights and responsibilities. This bond goes beyond the sexual relationship to encompass the pursuit of psychological and spiritual happiness. This concept of natural marriage is shared by heavenly religions.

In the global human rights framework, the family is regarded as the basic unit of society. Article 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides that "Men and women of full age...have the right to marry and to found a family... The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State". Moreover, many human rights instruments explicitly require all States to provide support and protection for the family.

It goes without saying that the scope of application of comprehensive sexual education, promoted by programs that are supported by SOGI advocates and certain UN agencies' publications, undermines children's physiological stability and harmonious growth, to the detriment of their best interests.

The OIC and its specialized institutions, including the Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission, have undertaken numerous activities and initiatives to promote and empower the marriage and family institution. In February 2017, the First OIC Ministerial Conference on the "Marriage and Family Institution and the Preservation of its Values in Member States", held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, adopted the Jeddah Declaration which strongly rejects the SOGI concept.

For its part, the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) has repeatedly expressed its rejection of the idea of SOGI rights. In its Resolution No. 4/49-C on Social and Family Affairs, the 49th CFM session "reaffirmed its rejection of the UN Human Rights Council Resolution on Sexual Orientation and the establishment of the mandate of Independent Expert on this matter. It also "provided full support for the position of the ambassadors of the OIC Group in Geneva that would neither recognize nor cooperate with this new mandate".

It is true that OIC countries remain generally unaffected by the threats facing the marriage and family institution by SOGI lobbying groups, as seen in many Western societies. However, many indications suggest that it is better to act now before it is too late.



Prof. Dr. Noura bint Zaid Al-Rashoud,
Executive Director of
OIC-IPHRC

The ongoing debate about enabling lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals to practice their lifestyle as "normal families", viewed as a human right, proves to be legally indefensible.

8th Annual Coordination Meeting of OIC Institutions



The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, addressed the 8th Annual Coordination Meeting of OIC Institutions (ACMOI), held on December 4-5, 2024, at the OIC headquarters in Jeddah. He noted that the meeting was taking place amid a critical situation, with the ongoing Israeli attacks in the Gaza Strip, which claimed the lives of over 44,000 Palestinians, mostly children and women, in addition to a massive destruction of infrastructure. He also drew attention to the escalating humanitarian crises in Lebanon.

In the face of this situation, the Secretary-General called on OIC institutions to intensify their efforts to support the Palestinian people and mitigate their humanitarian crisis, emphasizing the need to translate solidarity into tangible actions.

The Secretary-General underscored the importance of enhancing coordination among OIC institutions to prevent resource duplication and build upon the positive outcomes of previous Islamic Summit Conferences and CFM sessions. Additionally, he stressed the need to prepare a Final Report and an Executive Plan for the Ten-Year Programme of Action (2026-2035).

On the sidelines of this event, the Secretary-General held a fruitful meeting with the Heads

of Delegation of OIC institutions.

The meeting concluded with the signing of several Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs), including a MoU between the OIC General Secretariat and UNA; a MoU between SESRIC and UNA; a MoU between SESRIC and IPHRC; and a MoU between SESRIC and WDO. The 8th Annual Coordination Meeting of OIC Institutions serves as a significant platform for the OIC institutions to discuss the joint implementation of the resolutions issued by the Islamic Summit, CFM sessions, and other ministerial-level meetings.

At the opening session of the 8th ACMOI held on December 4, 2024, the OIC Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Affairs, Dr. Ahmad Kawesa Sengendo, speaking on behalf of H.E. the Secretary-General, welcomed all heads of OIC institutions and their accompanying delegations. He indicated that most of the activities decided during the 7th ACMOI were successfully implemented, an achievement that can be seen through the analysis of the various reports submitted by OIC institutions to the OIC General Secretariat.

Dr. Sengendo noted that 2024 was a year of landmark events for the OIC, including the 15th Islamic Summit Conference, the 50th session of the Council of Foreign Ministers,

the Golden Jubilee of the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), and the 40th Session of COM-CEC, among others. These events, he added, adopted various resolutions aimed at guiding the OIC action and urging the participants to work toward further promoting global peace and security and enhancing sustainable development in the OIC Member States.

Dr. Sengendo highlighted the many challenges facing the work of the OIC and its Institutions. He pointed out the ongoing Israeli aggression and genocide against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, resulting in the forced displacement of over two million Palestinians, in addition to the massive destruction of civilian infrastructure.

Dr. Sengendo also touched on the challenges to sustainable development facing OIC Countries, and underlined the importance of scaling up joint OIC action to confront them. He asserted that the implementation of OIC resolutions and the delivery of qualitative solutions to promote socio-economic development in OIC Member States require institutional clarity in terms of the roles and responsibilities of executive agencies.

At the end of the 8th ACMOI, a Matrix of Agreed Actions to be implemented by the OIC institutions during 2025 was adopted.

OIC: National Medicine Regulatory Authorities Adopt Riyadh Declaration



The Third meeting of National Medicine Regulatory Authorities (NMRAs) of OIC Member States was held on December 18, 2024, in Riyadh. The meeting adopted the Riyadh Declaration and Action Plan 2025-2027.

The Riyadh Declaration emphasized the necessity of strengthening cooperation and networking among NMRAs, as well as adopting strategies and initiating actions designed to promote, as mutually agreed, relevant technology transfer, sharing of technical know-how, and human capacity-building for the development and manufacturing of pharmaceutical products by the domestic industry of the OIC Member States.

The Declaration called on NMRAs in the OIC Member States to cooperate in order to create effective quality assurance and control systems, with the aim of preventing risks to public health and enhancing Member States' capabilities to control and monitor the imported products.

The Declaration underlined the need for NMRAs in the OIC Member States to go more digital, by using effective and safe AI systems and developing partnerships with technology providers to promote AI-based medical innovations and pursue technology-based transformation to modernize the NMRAs' systems and capabilities.

The Action Plan 2025-2027 focuses on promoting collaboration among NMRAs in the OIC Member States for the promotion of medicine regulation and R&D ecosystems. The Action Plan includes five objectives: (1) strengthen cooperation and networking among NMRAs in the OIC Member States, (2) promote access to affordable and high-quality medicines and vaccines, (3) develop R&D ecosystem resources, (4) ensure adequate and sustainable funding system for NMRAs, and (5) advance NMRAs maturity and achieve good regulatory practices/benchmarking tool.

The meeting called on NMRAs in the OIC Member States to form working groups to develop the necessary mechanisms for implementing the Action Plan 2025-2027 and ensuring the achievement of its objectives.

During the two days of the meeting, participants made presentations and held discussions in five Working Sessions. The First Working Session, entitled "Strategies for Enhancing Collaboration and Regulatory Harmonization among OIC NMRAs: Current State, Challenges and Opportunities", featured presentations by SESRIC, COMSTECH, and the Saudi Food and Drug Authority. In the Second Working Session entitled "Biotech Regulation and Localization within OIC", presentations were made by five Member States: Saudi Arabia, Turkiye, Jordan,

Oman, and Morocco. The Third Working Session, entitled "Developing R&D Ecosystem", featured presentations by five Member States: Gabon, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Senegal, and the United Arab Emirates. In the Fourth Working Session entitled "Access to Affordable and Quality Medicines and Vaccines", presentations were made by the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) as well as three Member States: Tajikistan, Turkiye, and Mozambique. The Fifth Working Session, entitled "NMRA Maturity and GBT Status", featured presentations by four Member States: Brunei Darussalam, Pakistan, Azerbaijan, and Uganda, along with the Saudi Food and Drug Authority.

Representatives from 30 OIC Member States, as well as representatives from SESRIC, COMSTECH, IsDB, and SMIIC, took part in the meeting.

On behalf of the OIC Secretary-General, the OIC Assistant Secretary-General for Science and Technology, Amb. Aftab Ahmad Khokher, expressed thanks to the Saudi Food and Drug Authority and commended its professional leadership and commitment. He reiterated the OIC General Secretariat's commitment to continue supporting cooperation among NMRAs of OIC Member States.

2nd Coordination Meeting of OIC Islamic Universities in Kuala Lumpur

The Second Coordination Meeting of OIC Islamic Universities was convened on November 27, 2024, at the headquarters of the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Jointly organized by the OIC and IIUM under the theme of “University for Society,” the event brought together Presidents, Rectors, and representatives of OIC Islamic Universities, including the Islamic University of Technology (IUT) in Dhaka, Bangladesh, the International Islamic University in Malaysia (IIUM), the Islamic University in Uganda (IUIU), the Islamic University in Niger (IUN), and King Faisal University (URFT) in Chad. Representatives from OIC Institutions, including COMSTECH, IsDB, SESRIC, ISF, IRCICA, ICYF, and IIFA also took part in the meeting, which explored strategies for leveraging education to address societal needs.

The event was inaugurated by Mr. Tan Sri Samudin Osman, President of IIUM, in the presence of prominent members of the IIUM Board of Governors, including the Ambassadors of Bangladesh, Libya, Pakistan, and Türkiye. H.E. Amb. Aftab Ahmad Khokher, Assistant Secretary-General for Science and Technology, delivered an opening address on behalf of H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, OIC Secretary-General, in which he emphasized the critical role of Islamic Universities as catalysts for societal development, and the need to align academic initiatives with pressing global challenges. Amb. Khokher highlighted the contributions of OIC-affiliated Universities in advancing societal



transformation, through education grounded in Islamic values. He outlined priorities such as increasing scholarships for students from least developed countries, incorporating environmental education to address climate change, and equipping students with digital and technological skills to keep pace with global developments. He underscored the significance of promoting gender equality, enhancing peace and interreligious dialogue, and strengthening partnerships with industries and governments. He urged participants to prioritize establishing agricultural colleges to bolster food security, and to implement the recommendations adopted at the First Coordination Meeting, held in Jeddah on January 16, 2024.

Following the meeting, IIUM organized a workshop on November 28, 2024, titled: “Islamic University Education for the Future: Uni-

versity for Society”, which brought together Presidents of OIC-affiliated Universities, representatives of OIC institutions, Malaysian deans, rectors, teachers, and students. The workshop highlighted the crucial role of Islamic Universities in shaping societal transformation through innovative, values-based education.

Addressing the workshop, Amb. Aftab Ahmad Khokher, OIC Assistant Secretary-General for Science and Technology, highlighted the importance of integrating advanced technological skills with ethical principles, addressing global challenges through cross-disciplinary approaches, promoting equality, and strengthening partnerships with industries and governments. The workshop called for collaborative efforts to redefine education as a catalyst for personal growth, social responsibility, and sustainable development in the Islamic world.

OIC Secretary-General Receives General Coordinator of COMSTECH



On the sidelines of the 8th Annual Coordination Conference of OIC Institutions, held at the headquarters of the OIC General Secretariat on December 4-5, 2024, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received, on December 4, 2024, in his office at the OIC headquarters, H.E. Prof. Iqbal Shawthari, General Coordinator of the Standing Committee for Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH).

The meeting discussed ways to enhance institutional cooperation between the OIC General Secretariat and COMSTECH, and to support the scientific and technological projects supervised by COMSTECH in the service of OIC Member States.

OIC Secretary-General Chairs the Meeting of the Bureau of the International Islamic Fiqh Academy



The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, chaired the Second Meeting of the Bureau of the International Islamic Fiqh Academy (IIFA), held on December 26, 2024. The meeting was attended by His Eminence Dr. Saleh bin Abdullah bin Humaid, IIFA Presi-

dent, and Prof. Dr. Qutub Mustafa Sano, IIFA Secretary-General, in addition to the Members of the Bureau. In his opening remarks, the OIC Secretary-General welcomed the members of the Bureau, and congratulated the Academy for the

pivotal role it plays, through which informed answers are provided about the current complex challenges brought about by technological and scientific advances, based on the principles and teachings of Islam. He pointed out that the Academy is not only a symbol of moderation, but also serves as a necessary platform for developing an in-depth and moderate understanding of Islam in the service of all Humanity.

The Secretary-General expressed his thanks to all Member States, especially the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the host country of the OIC and the IIFA, for the continued support it offers for both Organizations. He extended thanks to the IIFA President, to the IIFA Secretary-General, and to all members of the Bureau, wishing the IIFA success in its noble mission.

The meeting agenda included a review of the IIFA activities, along with administrative and financial issues. The meeting also discussed preparations for the 26th session of the Council of the International Islamic Fiqh Academy, to be hosted by Doha, Qatar, in 2025.

OIC Secretary-General Participates in 16th Meeting of the BoT of the International Islamic University Islamabad

The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, joined the prominent dignitaries attending the 16th Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI). The meeting was hosted by Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University in Riyadh on December 23, 2024.

The meeting was chaired by H.E. Prof. Dr. Ahmad Salem Al-Ameri, Pro-Chancellor of IIUI and Rector of Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University, on behalf of the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Asif Ali Zardari, who serves as Chairman of the IIUI Board of Trustees. Members of the Board participated both virtually and in person, representing various regions and institutions world-

wide. The Board deliberated on a series of key agenda items aimed at advancing the academic and infrastructural development of IIUI. The decisions and resolutions adopted by the meeting reflect a shared commitment to enhancing the University's role as a center of excellence in education and scientific research, serving the interests of the Muslim Ummah.

The International Islamic University Islamabad was founded on November 11, 1980, to produce scholars and practitioners who are imbued with Islamic ideology, whose character and personality conform to the teachings of Islam, and who are able to cater to the economic, social, political, technological and in-

tellectual needs of the Muslim Ummah. The Islamic Research Institute and other units like Iqbal International Institute for Research & Dialogue, Dawah Academy, Shariah Academy, and Institute of Professional Development are situated within the premises of the majestic Faisal Mosque (spread over an area of 189,705 square meters) which is a symbol of Islamic brotherhood and unity.

The OIC Secretary-General's participation in this pivotal meeting underscores the OIC's strong support for educational initiatives that promote Islamic values, foster global collaboration, and empower future generations to contribute to the progress and development of the Muslim world.



OIC General Secretariat Joins Islamic Cooperation Youth Forum in Celebrating its 20th Anniversary

As part of implementing the Resolutions adopted by the 5th Islamic Conference of Youth and Sports Ministers (ICYSM) and the 50th CFM session, the Training Session on "Integrating OIC Youth Strategy into National Programs and Action Plans in OIC Member States" was held on November 25, 2024, in Ankara, Türkiye. The event was jointly organized by the OIC General Secretariat and SESRIC, in collaboration with the Ministry of Sports of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Chair of the ICYSM. Chaired by H.E. Mr. Abdulaziz Abdulrahman ALMASAED, Deputy Minister for Sports and Youth, Ministry of Sport of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the opening session featured statements by H.E. Dr. Safa KOÇO LU, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Youth and Sports of Türkiye, H.E. Mrs. Zehra Zümrüt SELÇUK, Director-General of SESRIC, H.E. Mr. Taha AYHAN, President of the Islamic Cooperation Youth Forum (ICYF), and H.E. Mr. Nasser MAJALI, Secretary-General of the Islamic Solidarity Sports Association (ISSA). All speakers highlighted the importance of the session. On behalf of the OIC Secretary-General H.E.

Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, Ambassador Tarig Ali Bakheet, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian, Cultural and Social Affairs, welcomed, in a video statement, all participants in the training session, and expressed appreciation for the Government of Türkiye for its continuous support to the activities of OIC and SESRIC. He highlighted the great importance that OIC attaches to the empowerment and capacity-building of youth, through its resolutions adopted by the Islamic Summit Conference, the Council of Foreign Ministers, and the Sectorial Ministerial Conferences. During the training session, 66 participants from 34 Member States, along with representatives from relevant OIC institutions, including ISDB, ICYF, and ISSA, shared the best practices and experiences of their respective countries and institutions with regard to integrating OIC youth-related policies and objectives into the national programs and plans of action of OIC Countries. On December 18, 2024, and at the invitation of H.E. Mr. Taha Ayhan, President of ICYF, the OIC General Secretariat participated in the ceremony

held in celebration of the ICYF's 20th anniversary, organized at the ICYF headquarters in Istanbul, Türkiye. The ceremony featured the participation of high-level officials, including the Deputy Minister of Youth and Sports of Türkiye, Deputy Ministers from Azerbaijan and Iran, representatives from the Ministry of Sports of Saudi Arabia, Chair of the current session of the ICYSM, along with the Directors-General of IRCICA, SESRIC, and COMCEC. Speaking on behalf of the OIC General Secretariat, Mr. Boubakari Maiga, Head of the Youth and Sports Department, conveyed the OIC General Secretariat's congratulations to ICYF, and expressed deep thanks and gratitude to the Republic of Türkiye for its support to ICYF, which has enabled it to realize significant achievements during the past 20 years. He noted that this event represents a celebration of the OIC Family, and is a recognition of the role played by ICYF, as an OIC-affiliated Institution, in achieving the OIC objectives in terms of youth empowerment and capacity-building.



OIC Secretary-General Visits IsDB Pavilion at COP29

On the sidelines of his participation at COP29, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, visited the pavilion of the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) Group. This visit highlighted the strong partnership between the OIC and IsDB in addressing critical climate and development challenges facing OIC Member States.

H.E. Mr. Muhammad Al Jasser, President of the IsDB Group, warmly received the Secretary-General, and briefed him on the IsDB's activities and initiatives at COP29.

The IsDB pavilion featured a range of engagements and side events, showcasing the Bank's ongoing efforts to support OIC Member States in their response to climate change impacts, with particular focus on the most vulnerable communities.

Among the initiatives highlighted were the IsDB's innovative Islamic finance products designed to support green projects and sustain-

able investments. The Bank seeks to leverage these solutions to mobilize financing for climate adaptation and mitigation efforts, thereby contributing to a resilient and sustainable future for OIC Member States.

In his remarks, the OIC Secretary-General commended the IsDB for its proactive role in providing financing solutions tailored to address the specific needs of OIC Member States. He lauded the Bank's commitment to promoting sustainable development, and emphasized the importance of coordinated efforts to combat the adverse effects of climate change.

On October 17, 2024, Istanbul hosted the 40th General Assembly Meeting of the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Development (ICCD). Addressing the opening ceremony, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, stated that the ICCD, being the voice of the private sectors in 57 OIC Countries, plays a key role in fostering a culture

of entrepreneurship, empowering SMEs, and strengthening collaboration among the private sector, government and civil society.

The Secretary-General called on the General Assembly to focus on specific program areas that the ICCD should incorporate in its Programme of Action for the years 2025 and 2026, including SMEs and MSMEs priority projects, digitalization, investment, and agricultural and tourism projects. Activities should also prioritize the role of youth and women, leverage digital transformation, and reflect the needs of economic trends. The General Assembly Meeting reviewed the report on the implementation of the programs and projects of the ICCD as well as its financial report for 2024. The Meeting approved the recommendation of the ICCD's 37th Board of Directors Meeting on the Activities and Programmes of ICCD for 2025.



OIC Secretary-General Visits ICESCO Pavilion at COP29 and Commends its Innovative Contributions

On the sidelines of his participation at COP29, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, paid a visit to the pavilion of the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO). He was warmly welcomed by H.E. Dr. Salim M. AlMalik, Director-General of ICESCO, who briefed him on ICESCO's innovative initiatives and programs specifically designed for COP29.

Dr. AlMalik highlighted the various activities and events that ICESCO has planned for the Conference, including high-level ministerial meetings and roundtable discussions to address critical topics, such as the role of space science in bolstering climate action and the significant impact of cultural heritage in fostering environmental sustainability.

The OIC Secretary-General commended ICESCO for its proactive approach in showcasing the Islamic world's contributions to addressing climate change. He underscored the importance of ICESCO's initiatives, which span scientific, educational, and cultural dimensions, and commended its efforts in driving innovative solutions within its fields of action. He reaffirmed the OIC General Secretariat's support for ICESCO, noting that its programs align with the broader OIC goals of advancing sustainable human development and promoting

resilience across the Islamic world.

The Secretary-General also emphasized the need for enhanced collaboration among OIC Member States, highlighting the shared responsibility in tackling the global climate crisis. He lauded ICESCO's commitment to promoting a holistic approach that integrates science, technology, education, and cultural preservation as key tools in the global fight against climate change.

The ICESCO pavilion at COP29 serves as a platform to highlight the diverse initiatives of the Islamic world in the climate arena, reinforcing the Organization's role as a leader in knowledge sharing and capacity building for sustainable development.

On another note, and in celebration of the World Mental Health Day, the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) held, in partnership with the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Communication of the Kingdom of Morocco, and the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade, a roundtable under the theme: "All for the Mental Health and Well-Being of Youth". This event aimed to raise awareness of the importance of joining efforts at all levels to address mental health issues and support people suffering from mental disorders.

In his statement at the opening of the roundtable, held on October 9, 2024, at the headquarters of the Ministry of Youth, Culture, and Communication in Rabat, Dr. Abdelilah Benarafa, ICESCO Deputy Director-General, touched upon the relationship between mental health and culture, noting that cultural activities contribute to reducing mental illnesses and disorders. He gave an overview of ICESCO's anti-bullying program, which involves holding a series of educational workshops, lectures, and various competitions.

For her part, Ms. Ramata Almamy Mbaye, Head of the Social and Human Sciences Sector at ICESCO, commended the fruitful partnership between ICESCO, the Ministry, and the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade, which culminated in holding this roundtable. She also reviewed ICESCO's efforts in the field of health and psychological care.

Mr. Mohamed Mehdi Bensaid, Minister of Youth, Culture, and Communication of the Kingdom of Morocco, in a statement delivered on his behalf by Mr. Mustafa Al-Masoudi, Secretary-General of the Ministry, highlighted the fruitful partnership between the Ministry and ICESCO, which has yielded several programs and projects.

OIC Discusses the Statute of Humanitarian Funds



The OIC General Secretariat convened, on November 13, 2024, at its headquarters in Jeddah, an Open-Ended Governmental Expert Group Meeting to discuss the Draft Statute of the OIC Humanitarian Funds, in implementation of the relevant resolution issued by the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM).

In his opening remarks, delivered on his behalf by Amb. Tarig Ali Bakheet, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian, Cultural, and Social Affairs, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, noted that the meeting takes place amid challenging and dire humanitarian conditions that require collective efforts and unified action to develop mechanisms that can help mitigate these humanitarian crises and hardships.

The Secretary-General underscored the need to make all efforts to finalize the Statute of these Funds, introduce the necessary reforms to enhance their operational efficiency, and secure adequate financial resources so that these Funds can fulfill their purpose. He also outlined the pressing challenges that Member States encounter in the humanitarian field.

The Secretary-General expressed his thanks

and gratitude to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for its ongoing support for the OIC. He extended his thanks to the Republic of Cameroon, the current Chair of the Council of Foreign Ministers, for chairing the meeting on the Statute of Humanitarian Funds, as well as to the State of Qatar for its leading role in humanitarian action and its initiative for the establishment of these funds and the formulation of the new draft statute.

On October 2, 2024, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, addressed the 10th General Assembly Meeting of the OIC States Broadcasting Union (OSBU), which was held virtually.

The Secretary-General highlighted the Union's leading role in conveying a purposeful media message for the Islamic Ummah, by promoting a moderate religious discourse on Islam and its noble values, effectively contributing to refuting Islamophobia and countering smear campaigns against Islamic symbols.

The Secretary-General emphasized the Union's key role in defending the Palestinian Cause, which is going through a highly critical and serious stage due to the Israeli occupation

forces' continuous targeting of the Palestinian people in the Palestinian cities, especially in Gaza. According to the report issued by the "OIC Media Observatory on Israeli Crimes Against Palestinians" issued on September 24, 2024, more than 42,147 Palestinians were martyred and at least 101,568 injured since October 7, 2023.

The Secretary-General expressed his deep thanks and appreciation to the Minister of Information of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, H.E. Mr. Salman bin Yousef Al-Dosari, Chairman of the Executive Board and General Assembly of the Union, for his constant support for the Union's work and his efforts to smooth out difficulties. He commended the significant material and moral support and facilities continuously provided by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which has enabled the Union to advance media activities in radio and television broadcasting. He also praised the leadership capacities of the Union's President, H.E. Dr. Amr Al-Laithi, who, with the support of his team, strives to develop programs and projects in radio and television broadcasting.

Secretary-General Receives Executive Director of Women Development Organization

The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received, on December 4, 2024, in his office at the OIC headquarters in Jeddah. H.E. Dr. Afnan Alshuaiby, Executive Director of the Women Development Organization.

The meeting took place on the sidelines of the 8th Annual Coordination Meeting of the OIC Institutions (ACMOI), held on December 4–5, 2024.

The meeting explored ways of strengthening institutional cooperation and coordination

between the OIC General Secretariat and the Women Development Organization, particularly in supporting and promoting the role of women in society.

Ancient Monuments and Architectural Heritage of Old Mosques in Kuwait

Kuwait - Hajjaj Salama - DPA

Kuwaiti architecture reflects the influence of various cultures, including Ottoman and Indian. Ottoman architecture emerged in Kuwait with the expansion of the Ottoman Empire in different regions of the Muslim world over the centuries. As for the influence of Indian architecture, it was the result of the close interaction between Kuwaiti merchants and the workers on commercial ships who traveled to various regions of India for trade and for transporting goods. These individuals became familiar with the details of Indian culture through their daily interactions, experiencing Indian architecture, art, food, and markets.

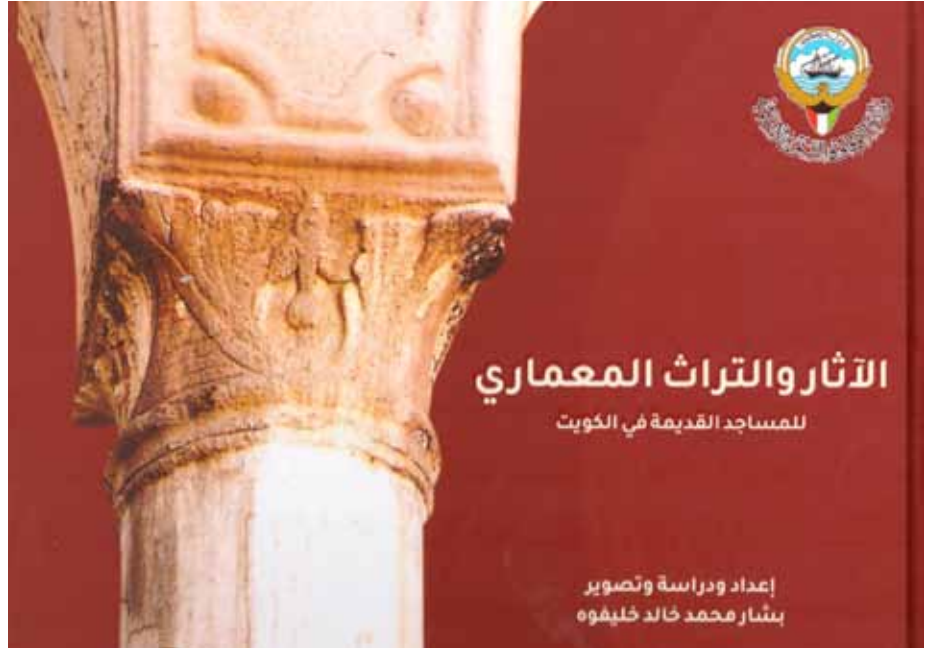
Mosques are among the most prominent features of Kuwait's architecture, serving as a testament to the rich architectural heritage and civilization of Kuwait and its people. They also provide living proof of the great attention that Kuwaitis, both rulers and citizens, attach to Muslim places of worship.

"Ancient Monuments and Architectural Heritage of Old Mosques in Kuwait", a book authored by Bashar Mohammed Khaled Khalifa, and published by Kuwait's Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, highlights the significant attention paid by Kuwaitis to mosques before and after the oil revolution, and describes the prominent architectural features distinguishing these mosques.

The book explores the emergence and development of architectural styles in historic mosques and the first mosques built in Kuwait. It provides an artistic and historical study of the architectural designs of minarets, dome lighting, mihrabs, pulpits, columns, and ancient gates and their decorative elements.

The author focuses on the significant developments in the architecture of mosques in Kuwait, highlighting the prominent role played by the Kuwait General Awqaf Authority in this regard. He sheds light on the architectural features of old mosques, from the establishment of the first mosques in the State of Kuwait until they reached the old architectural style that the Awqaf Authority worked to revive after 1949.

The book discusses the change in the architectural styles of mosques and the role of the General Awqaf Authority in defining this type of Islamic architecture. "First Mosques of Kuwait" is one of the chapter titles in this book



that explores the qualitative leap in the architecture of these mosques. Another chapter entitled: "Practical Development of Architectural Fabric and the Role of the Awqaf Authority," focuses on the work undertaken by the Awqaf Authority to introduce fundamental transformations into the architectural style of old mosques.

The book offers a historical study of the architectural features of Kuwaiti mosques, with a focus on the artistic and aesthetic aspects, decorations, and engravings, along with a description of columns, doors, and windows, as well as minarets, domes, pulpits, and mihrabs. It also includes an analysis of designs and inscriptions, linking them to the Islamic schools to which they belong.

The book shows that Kuwaitis - in both ancient and modern times - have an aesthetic taste, which finds its illustration in the clear aesthetic features seen in mosques from the 1950s, reflecting architecture that embodies the spirit and identity of Kuwait.

The book tells us that the year 1949 marked a clear qualitative leap in the architecture of old mosques in Kuwait, with the Awqaf Authority having played a key role in introducing a new style of architecture that involved expanding mosques and building tall minarets. The Authority later evolved into a modern Ministry in the early 1960s to lead various Islamic activi-

ties and initiatives, expanding beyond its modest beginnings in 1949.

As the author notes, the Awqaf Authority sought the assistance of engineers, architects, and skilled Kuwaiti builders, whose experiences and expertise helped impart this new architectural spirit to Kuwait's old mosques.

The author highlights the architectural history of Kuwaiti mosques, studying their early designs from an aesthetic and artistic perspective, while linking them to their artistic schools. He notes that since the establishment of the Awqaf Authority in 1949, there has been a clear evolution in mosque decoration and architecture, using modern methods and engineering plans, whether for the building of new mosques or the revival of old ones, while relying on architectural experts from other countries. This evolution has continued year after year, with clear differences in the country's mosque architecture between the period before the establishment of the Awqaf Authority and the period after.

The author also reviews the history of mosque construction and architecture in Kuwait, noting that before the establishment of the Awqaf Authority, mosques took the form of "Areesh," or small rooms made of sea stones, clay, and wooden columns, with roofs made of Jandal wood.

What have you done, Gaza?

One of the existential challenges that has accompanied the Zionist project since its inception in the late 19th century is the nature of the state or entity that the Zionist movement seeks to establish. As pointed out by historians and researchers, there have been profound divergences between the liberal-secular perspective and the biblical perspective regarding the nature of the desired society and state.

These divergences escalated into a bloody conflict in the streets and alleys of Europe. They then accompanied the waves of voluntary and involuntary Jewish migrants aboard crowded ships to the peaceful Palestinian lands. The tug-of-war continued within this entity, with the Ashkenazi progressive secular movement clearly dominating throughout the founding and construction period until the mid-1990s, when Israel started to gradually shift to the right.

No doubt, political and economic factors have played a prominent role in strengthening the Israeli right, but the most significant factor has been the stalemate of the entire Israeli project which, since its inception, has failed to secure the 'geography' needed for its stability, nor the 'demography' needed for its sovereignty over the lands already under its control and those in its plans.

This strategic failure has deepened with the resilience demonstrated by the Palestinian people in their steadfastness on their land, a resilience that no longer has to be proven. Accordingly, the promise of establishing a secure homeland for the Jews, on the basis of which Zionism has built its media propaganda for decades, is now in question.

This 'existential anxiety' accompanying this project, even during its most glorious victories, has strengthened the Israeli Right's presence across all segments of the Israeli society, leading the entire society to shift to the right. The political conflict in Israel has thus become one between the right and the far right—between the radical and the more radical. Consequently, the existential crisis that emerged with the establishment of the entity has deepened even further, with the biblical rhetoric now rising to the surface and ranking high on political, social, and cultural agendas.

Religious prophecies are now directing the course of politics, and the political conflict with the Palestinians over territory has taken on an entirely religious dimension. Talking about the two-state solution, the illusion that Israel had sold to the world for decades, has become a sort of political-religious taboo.

It was amidst the growing religious sentiments of the imminent fulfillment of the prophecy that the events of October 7, 2023, came as a shock to Israel and the Israeli people. On that day, Israel was hit hard by its weakest enemies, and its dignity was humiliated. This has exacerbated the anxiety about the viability of the Zionist project, especially with the steadfastness shown by the Palestinians in Gaza during fourteen months filled with every form of cruelty, bloodshed, and madness against them.

This Palestinian strategic steadfastness has placed Israel in front of its worst nightmare: its incapacity to break the will of the Palestinian people and force them out of their land, coupled with its military failure to subjugate the Gaza Strip. This explains the extreme language used in the statements of Israeli leaders, filled with terms like "decisive steps", "extermination", "expulsion", "killing", and "destruction", among others. These terms tell much about the deep psychological complexes suffered by this entity's leaders, as well as the internal frustration they feel at the thought that the biblical promises they were raised on are not coming true.

This frustration has now become the main driving force behind Israel's policy, explaining the confusion that has befallen it these days: accepting the ceasefire and quickly engaging in implementing the terms of the ceasefire agreement; then highly welcoming the US President's proposal to relocate Gazans and preparing the army to start the relocation; then setting new conditions for the implementation of the second phase of the agreement, followed by an announcement that the army is ready for a new military operation; and then relaxing the terms of the second phase of the agreement. These decisions and statements are coming at such a fast pace now that they seem to be measured in hours, rather than weeks or months, as is the case in countries that pursue rational and properly thought-out policies.

Undoubtedly, the unified Arab position, backed by the Islamic stance, regarding the thwarting of the Gaza relocation plan will further exacerbate the crisis of the Zionist project. In fact, neither the Zionists nor those who support them have so far understood that absolute power has never brought security or stability to our region. The only "achievement" from violence is further laying bare the Zionist project and the erosion of peoples' and States' solidarity with it. This will, in turn, intensify the existential crisis suffered by the Israeli entity whose alienation is not only regional but has now become global. It will further deepen the Arab aversion to this entity, an aversion now on its way to becoming global.

History has taught us that political issues in the Middle East cannot be decisively settled by force, and that the more force is used, the deeper its failure becomes. The fate of the former Syrian regime is a recent case in point. Gaza has historically proven to be a rock upon which the dreams of invaders are shattered. Just as this rock broke the prestige of Hulagu in the Battle of Hattin, it will break Netanyahu's euphoria and Ben-Gvir's madness.



Dr. Tarek Ladjal

*Professional Officer at
the Cabinet of Secretary-
General*

*The political conflict
in Israel has thus be-
come one between
the right and the far
right—between the
radical and the more
radical*

Karnak Temples: Engravings that Tell the History of Egypt

Luxor (DPA)

“Karnak, a world to lose yourself in!” This is how Egyptologists and history books describe the Karnak Temple Complex, which stretches over vast areas to the east of the historic city of Luxor in Upper Egypt. Among its features are magnificent gates and towering columns, with ruins dating back to ancient Thebes (modern-day Luxor), which remained the capital of ancient Egypt for centuries.

The place tells the story of great pharaohs who ruled the country and contributed their efforts to the construction of those massive temples. The engravings, drawings, and artistic murals created by ancient Egyptian artists on the columns, walls, and ceilings of Karnak temples and sanctuaries capture many details of daily life in ancient Egypt.

Archaeologists and Egyptologists consider the Karnak Temple Complex as one of the largest ancient temples not only in Egypt but also in the entire world.

Historical sources indicate that in order to have a full view of all these massive monuments, a visitor should climb to the top of the first pylon built there. In the foreground is the Great Court of the Ethiopians and the Sheshonq Portal Gate, behind which is the grand roofed hall with its columns, followed by Hatshepsut's Obelisk, the Granite Temple, and the Festival

Hall of Thutmose III, and in the distant horizon, the eastern gate.

To the right lies the Sacred Lake and the remains of the Tomb of Osiris, the southern Pylons, and other buildings and monuments. These treasures have attracted the attention of explorers, foreign Egyptologists, and Egyptian archaeologists who have sought to uncover more of the area's monuments and secrets through research, studies, and excavation works, which continue to this day.

As part of the ongoing research, studies, and archaeological excavations in the Karnak Temple Complex and its surroundings, Egyptian archaeologist Dr. Mansour Boraik wrote his book entitled: “The Karnak Temples: The Area in Front of the First Pylon, from Dynastic Periods to the Early Islamic Era”. Dr. Boraik led a series of excavation works conducted by an Egyptian archaeological mission in the western court of the Karnak Temples during eight consecutive years.

The book, published by Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities, presents the results of the Egyptian archaeological mission's work in the western court of Karnak, revealing monuments and artifacts, and uncovering evidence and secrets that shed light on significant aspects of the history of these temples, which to date still retain many of their secrets.

The book summarizes the scientific results of the excavations overseen by Dr. Mansour Boraik. These results have changed the scientific perception of the area (the western court of Karnak Temples), adding new historical and archaeological information to the history of the Karnak Temples, alongside the geological and geographical details of ancient Thebes (modern-day Luxor) across the ages. Most of what has been revealed were movable architectural artifacts, many of which appear for the first time and are not duplicated in other temples in Thebes.

In the first chapter, the book focuses on the ruins in front of the Karnak Temples throughout the ages. It describes the engravings and scenes from ancient Egypt and how they evolved with time, the stone slabs and blocks, and the artifacts found there, both movable and immovable, as well as the architectural additions and the associated historical events.

In the second chapter, the author analyzes the main artifacts from ancient Pharaonic periods, as well as those uncovered in the region, such as the massive stone wall around the Karnak temples, which extends south to the Avenue of the Sphinxes in front of the Temple of Khonsu.





Reading in Algeria: A Flourishing Practice

Algiers (DPA)

Anyone who visited the Algiers International Book Fair is left with many questions. In fact, the scenes of “pushing and shoving” to buy a book bearing the signature of its Arab writer, prompting the intervention of security forces, the large demand for the publications of the Egyptian “Asir Al-Kutub” publishing house and for religious books, and the unprecedented interest in buying books and literature written in English, all indicate that there is an emerging tendency among Algerian readers that needs to be explored in greater depth.

One journalist said that he was amazed at the large turnout of visitors at the Book Fair, especially youth, considering this a healthy sign that inspires optimism. He admitted that a few years ago, those scenes would have seemed unrealistic, almost like a dream.

The journalist, Ahmed, shared his experience at the Fair, moving from one booth to another, carrying a bag filled with books he bought from various publishing houses. Algerians, he said, are now rushing to buy books in different languages.

Nesreen, a young Algerian woman in her twenties who worked as a hostess at the booth of the Egyptian “Asir Al-Kutub” publishing house, highlighted the record demand

for religious and psychological books, along with other publications. Books by Palestinian writer Adham Al-Sharqawi garnered particular attention.

Nesreen was unable to identify the reasons behind this great demand, but she proudly highlighted the success of the publishing house she was working with in attracting readers, as if to say that she had successfully fulfilled her mission, and that Algerians truly love reading and have a strong passion for it, contrary to what some might suggest.

Meanwhile, the Imam of “Anas Ibn Malik” mosque in one of the neighborhoods of Algiers did not forget to announce, before ascending the pulpit for the Friday sermon, that the mosque’s library had been enriched with over 150 titles from various religious fields. He thanked the worshippers who had responded to his call a few days earlier to seize the opportunity of the Book Fair to purchase books and other publications for the mosque’s library. He indicated that he had personally supervised the whole process to ensure the books purchased do not conflict with true Islamic references.

Some have tried to explain the unprecedented demand for books penned by specific writers, linking it to the revolution brought about by digital technologies and their clear impact on

methods of communication among people. One Algerian writer, who preferred to remain anonymous, stated that the writer who won the “most popular award” owes his success, alongside his peculiar style of writing, to his strong presence on social media platforms. He pointed out that this writer has over 10 million followers on “TikTok” and “Instagram”, making it easier for him to reach out to a large readership among youth who are drawn to the stories and novels he writes and publishes, including many readers from Algeria. This was clear in the latest edition of the Book Fair.

Some have sought to “place the blame” on the shift in the mindset of Algerian youth and the cumulative impact of internal ideological conflicts on their psyche. Yet, they acknowledged that what they observed requires in-depth studies by experts to achieve an adequate and accurate understanding.

Mourad, a colleague of Amira working for another publishing house, dispelled some of these doubts when he pointed out that the works of a writer gained significant popularity when he regularly appeared on a TV show, but saw a 70% decline in demand when this writer disappeared from the public eye.

Sudan

Capital: Khartoum

Total Area: 1,861,484 square kilometers

Population: 47,958,856

Official languages: Arabic and English

Currency: Sudanese Pound



The name "Sudan" was given to the area located south of the Sahara, stretching from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean in the east. The name now refers specifically to the area south of Egypt, particularly the central part of the Nile Basin. Sudan, or the Republic of The Sudan, is an Islamic, Arab, and African country that has a unique social fabric with a diversity of cultures and ethnicities, rarely seen in other parts of the world.

In 1938, the Graduates' General Congress was established as a social and cultural platform for higher education graduates in Sudan. However, it soon demanded an end to colonial rule in Sudan and the granting of self-determination to the Sudanese people. Efforts continued until the Sudanese parliament convened on December 19, 1955, declared Sudan's independence, and demanded that the Anglo-Egyptian colonial powers recognize Sudan as an independent state. The British and Egyptian forces withdrew, and the Sudanese flag was raised on January 1, 1956.

At the beginning of 2011, Sudan's population was estimated at around 33,419,625, consisting of various tribes of Arab, African, and Nubian descent.

Sudan has a tropical climate, with high temperatures recorded most of the year. The climate ranges from very dry in the far north to sub-humid in the south. Additionally, there are desert and semi-desert climates in the northern regions (Northern State, North Kordofan, and North Darfur), with more rainfall in the central and southern parts.

Most of the country consists of flat plains, with highlands in the east and the Nuba Mountains and Marrah Mountains in the west. Sudan is located between latitudes 8.45° and 23.8° north, and longitudes 21.49° to 38.24° east. Annual rainfall ranges from almost zero in the extreme north to 500-1000 mm in southern Sudan.

The Nile River and its tributaries play a vital role in Sudan's economic, social, and cultural life, as well as in its foreign relations. They are used for generating electricity from dams such as Rosaries, Sennar, Khasm El Girba, Jebel Awlia, and Merowe, as well as for navigation and fishing. The groundwater reserve is estimated at around 900 billion cubic meters, suitable for irrigation and domestic use.

Religions practiced in Sudan are Islam and Christianity, along with some local traditional

faiths. The languages spoken in the country are Arabic and other local languages and dialects.

The system of government is decentralized, with three levels of authority: 1) National level, to protect the country's national sovereignty and territorial integrity and promote the well-being of the Sudanese people; 2) State level, to provide public proximity services to citizens; and 3) Local level, which is present in all parts of the country.

Sudan is divided into 18 states. Khartoum is the capital of Sudan and is known as the "triple capital", comprising three cities: Khartoum (political capital), Omdurman (national capital), and Khartoum Bahri (industrial capital).

Key industries in Sudan include textiles, cement, cooking oils, sugar, soap, leather products, food products, mining, and manufacturing. The livestock population in Sudan (2011) is estimated at 103,278,000 heads. Acacia and Tall trees contribute to Sudan's forest wealth. Mineral production in 2005 was recorded as follows: gold (4.73 tons), chromium (14,666 tons), gypsum (5,132 tons), salt (48,685 tons), and silver (2.40 tons), in addition to 113,094 barrels of crude oil (2004).



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



منظمة التعاون الإسلامي
OIC - OCI

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



منظمة التعاون الإسلامي
 OIC - OCI

