

OIC Secretary General attends a high-level meeting on Syria and holds a bilateral meeting with Mogherini at the UN

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The Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Yousef A. Al-Othaimeen attended the high-level meeting on Syria organized by the European Union on Wednesday 26 September 2018 on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York, within the framework of the OIC's support for all efforts to provide security and protection to civilians and prevent resurgence of violence in Syria. The meeting discussed the tragic situation in Idlib and ways of delivering humanitarian aid to the affected areas.

Al-Othaimeen also held a meeting with EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini, in which they discussed EU-OIC bilateral relations and means of developing them in all areas agreed upon in the MoU signed between the two sides. They addressed preparations for the next round of technical consultations in Brussels next month. During the meeting, the two sides exchanged views on the situation in the Middle East, especially developments in the Palestinian issue and Syria, and discussed the crisis of the Rohingya minority in Myanmar and their coordination on this issue in international fora.

On the other hand, in his address to the meeting of the OIC Contact Group on Muslims in Europe, which also took place at the UN headquarters on Wednesday, the Secretary General expressed the OIC's deep appreciation to EU governments and praised EU's collective efforts to promote pluralistic environments that preserve the rights of all minorities on its territory. But he expressed fears for this charming human coexistence due to the return of the far-right and extremist political parties in some parts of Europe,

which deliberately demonize Muslims and picture them as outsiders on the continent and fuel the so-called "clash of civilizations." The Secretary General stated that these extremist calls ignore the fact that the majority of Muslims on the continent are European citizens who have made profound contributions over generations to European societies and have added to the strength of the social and cultural fabric of various European countries.

Al-Othaimeen said that the most recent report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) of the Council of Europe noted that "Muslims continue to experience discrimination in various areas of social life, including education, employment and housing." Islam is depicted as being inherently incompatible with European norms and values, and constitutes a threat to security and way of life. In short, Muslims are often portrayed as an enemy within. Al-Othaimeen underscored the OIC's readiness to work hard on the issue of integration of Muslims in their European environments. He reaffirmed the OIC's willingness to engage with the Council of Europe to develop activities and programmes that can combat Islamophobia in Europe.

Other Press
