

Address of the OIC Secretary General Prof. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu to the Ministerial Open-Ended Meeting of the OIC Executive Committee On The Current Situation In Syria

 oic-oci.org/topic



Date: 01/12/2011

Excellency, Mr. Chairman, Your Excellencies, the Ministers Your Honours, the Heads of Delegations Honourable Participants, Allow me, at the outset, to offer you my heartfelt congratulations on the occasion of the Hijri New Year. May the Islamic Ummah, with the Grace of God, enjoy perpetual felicity and prosperity! Let us work together from the beginning of this year to consecrate the highest meanings of cohesion and cooperation inspired by the lofty message and principles of Islam and its tolerant principles which call for solidarity, synergy and brotherhood. I would like also to express my deep appreciation and gratitude to you all for having braved the difficulties of travel and responded to the invitation to attend this important meeting called for by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in coordination with the governments of Kazakhstan and Senegal in their capacity as chairmen of the Ministerial Conference and Islamic Summit respectively, to review the successive developments that the Syrian Arab Republic has been witnessing for over the past eight months, a set of events which cause us deep concern and preoccupation on account of the tragedies, bloodshed and loss of innocent lives on the Syrian scene. Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, From my position as the OIC Secretary General, and since the outbreak of the ongoing crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic, I made a point of following an approach of quiet diplomacy based on our principled commitment at the OIC not to intervene in the Member States' internal affairs

and to respect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of every Member State as stipulated under Article I, para 3, of the OIC Charter, and as established in the Rules of Procedure of the OIC Executive Committee. Out of our keenness to preserve Syria's safety, security and stability, our insistence on rejecting the internationalization of the Syrian crisis and working towards resolving it within the broader Islamic family as represented by the OIC, in harmony with the objectives of the OIC Charter which call, under Article I, para 2, for the coordination and unification of the Member States' efforts in order to face the challenges confronting the Islamic community in particular and the international community in general, we called for this ministerial OIC Executive Committee Meeting to convene for the purpose of consultation, coordination and adoption of any required measures that would help, as we hope, put an end to the bloodshed in Syria. In this respect, I would like to recall that, in my capacity as the OIC Secretary General, I have undertaken a number of initiatives which included dispatching a special envoy to Damascus in May 2011 to deliver a written message to the Syrian leadership in which I expressed our profound sadness at the continued escalation and aggravation of violent practices, and stressed the need for a commitment to protect civilians, respect human rights, activate the principles of good governance, apply the reforms promised by the Syrian leadership and resolve the Syrian crisis through peaceful means, as stipulated in the OIC Charter and its Ten-year Program of Action adopted by the Member States at their Extraordinary Summit in Makkah, Saudi Arabia, in December 2005. The OIC General Secretariat has never abandoned its fixed stand regarding the repercussions and developments in Syria. Since the outbreak of this crisis, the OIC General Secretariat has issued a number of statements reiterating its stand in favour of resolving the Syrian crisis through putting an end to the violence and bloodshed. The OIC called for a return to wisdom and serious dialogue with all Syrian national forces so as to meet the Syrian people's aspirations for democratic, economic and social reform. We made it clear that persisting in pursuing the security and military approach in the face of the peaceful demonstrations of the citizens who are calling for deeper democracy, political freedom and economic and social development, is an approach that has proven to be fruitless in containing the crisis and would only lead to the loss of more innocent lives and further complicate the internal situation. Moreover, since March 2011, I have kept up my appeals to the Syrian leadership to engage in an earnest dialogue with all national forces in Syria so as to reach an agreement on the reform measures and on their expeditious implementation in response to the Syrian people's demands and aspirations. The OIC also expressed its condemnation of the attacks against the embassies and diplomatic missions and called upon the Syrian authorities to assume their responsibility in protecting the foreign missions on their soil in accordance with the international law. However, in the face of the critical situation in Syria we have not limited ourselves to mere talk; we rather went further and expressed the OIC's readiness for actual and direct participation in order to contain the crisis in a manner that would be satisfactory to all parties and help achieve the concordance that would ensure Syria's stability, protect it against the dangers of the internationalization of the crisis, and against sliding, Allah forbid, towards any possible risks at the internal level and the consequent undermining of peace and security on its soil and in the neighbouring countries. Within the framework of our endeavours to find a solution to the Syrian crisis, we had decided in the early days of the crisis to send a high-

level delegation to Damascus in coordination with the Syrian authorities. Unfortunately, however, the visit did not materialize on the proposed date because the Syrian authorities were then rather occupied with following up the situation at the level of the Arab League. Let me point out here that all these initiatives undertaken by the OIC in favour of achieving a peaceful resolution for the Syrian crisis, form also a response to the demands of the Islamic public opinion for the OIC to act and make a contribution to the settlement of the crisis within the common Islamic fold. Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, In the face of the serious developments witnessed by the Syrian crisis and, given the rising momentum of regional and international moves aimed at impressing upon the Syrian Government to put an end to the acts of violence and aggression against civilians, I would like to reiterate, from this platform, our welcome for the international and regional efforts, including those put in by the Arab League, in order to contain the crisis in Syria. While we emphasize our firm principle regarding the rejection of any military intervention in Syria, respect for Syria's sovereignty, independence and unity and the need to put an end to the bloodshed, ensure the return of security and stability and keep in motion the reform process to achieve the Syrian people's hopes and aspirations, we also need to reiterate our stand against any internationalization of the Syrian crisis. Allow me to reiterate that, as we meet today to review the serious developments of the Syrian crisis within the Islamic fold, we are trying to seize the last opportunity. I assure you that during the last months, we at the OIC General Secretariat have not spared any effort in contributing to the resolution of the crisis. However, we have used up all our mechanisms and powers in the various attempts to bridge the gaps, stop bloodshed, and search for the rights of all parties concerned. Today, we are putting our stakes on the political wisdom, profound vision, and Muslim brotherhood of Their Excellencies the representatives of the OIC Member States to come out with a set of practical recommendations that may tangibly contribute towards drawing up an outline for a consensual solution to the Syrian crisis within the framework of Islamic solidarity. Let me, by way of concluding my statement, pray to Allah Almighty, to guide us all towards what would meet His satisfaction, and to ensure that our efforts lead to the discontinuation of violence and the adoption of peaceful approaches to end the crisis in Syria and respond to the Syrian people's legitimate demands, including the consecration and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, the realization of good governance, democracy and the sovereignty of law, as part of our abiding commitment to the stipulations of our Organization's Charter under Article I and II.

Other Press
