

Appeal to the international community by the OIC Secretary General to counter the Syrian refugee crisis

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The little Aylan's motionless body washed up to the shore leaves in fact no need to yet another lengthy statement, or even to another word, to remind us of the great humanitarian tragedy, which he and hundreds of thousands of Syrian children, men and women, youth and elderly have suffered and continue to suffer from. Like their many other compatriots, they were forced to embark on extremely difficult journeys, chasing a hope to live safe and in dignity with their families and loved ones. Treatment of the refugees in any way other than to be qualified as dignified and compassionate, hurts the conscious of the humanity. Those Syrian refugees who drowned in the Mediterranean, or suffocated in a human trafficker's truck in Austria, none of them are responsible for starting the Syrian crisis or for the failure to stop it. Yet, they are and continue to be the direct victims of both that crisis as well as the failure of the international community, particularly of the Members of the UN Security Council, and the countries of the region, to find a solution to it. This must not, and cannot continue to be so. It is our humanity getting drowned in the Mediterranean. It is our humanitarian values, principles, and our human dignity, getting suffocated. We must put an immediate end to this tragedy. Acknowledging the positive attitude and efforts made by some European countries, I call on all the Members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the international community as a whole to put aside their differences, and mobilize all their efforts to help the Syrian people and refugees. This is neither a Syrian, nor Middle Eastern, nor European nor Muslim crisis. This is an international humanitarian crisis, in which precious lives are perishing. From the very beginning, the OIC has been following with profound concern the escalating human tragedy of the Syrian refugees, fleeing their homes and seeking refuge in neighboring states. Many OIC Member States, most notably Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt have been carrying the extreme burden of the refugee flow out of Syria, and they have all allocated huge amount of resources to host more than four million of them in their respective countries. Similarly, in cooperation with the UN OCHA and other humanitarian partners, the OIC has been striving to help the victims of the conflict in Syria. Yet, the speedy deterioration of the Syrian refugee crisis and the manner they are stigmatized based on religion by some, or refused entry or ignored all together by others, tell us that we all should do more, and we should do more together. The world is witnessing a momentous period of instability and conflict that has produced what the United Nations describes as the largest pool of refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons since the ravages of World War II. This is a clear result of the failure of the international community to resolve the Syrian as well as other political crises; and the inability of some of us to address the issues of poverty, marginalization and hopelessness. Alarmed by the urgency of the matter, I appeal to the international community in its entirety to let no other calculations, but "humanitarianism" and "human dignity", guide their thinking while responding to the Syrian refugee crisis. I wish to remind all nations of their moral and legal obligations under the international law to help those desperate refugees. In particular, I wish to express the OIC's readiness to cooperate with the EU and its Member States and other partners in order to facilitate the successful settlement, resettlement and integration of

the Syrian refugees in places where they can live in peace and dignity. In order to stop this greatest humanitarian tragedy of our times, in its manifestation and root causes, we must act now; and we must act together.

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