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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by the International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty, a non- governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[13 February 2017]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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Declaration and concluding remarks on global summit: “Religion, Peace and Security”

How to foster better understanding between civilizations, cultures and religions, for the purpose to enhancing peace, security and human rights

A. DECLARATION

Peace is a journey – a never ending process. (UNESCO). But a culture of human dignity is inconceivable without freedom of religion or belief.

The UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON GENOCIDE PREVENTION AND RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT (OGPRtP) and the INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE DEFENSE OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY (AIDLR)¹ organized the Global Summit on Religion, Peace and Security, hosted at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, on 23-25 of November 2016. Participants, diverse in terms of gender, religion affiliation and regional origin, attended the Summit, interacted during three days and contributed to multidisciplinary discussions on how to foster better understanding between civilizations, cultures and religions, for the purpose to enhancing peace, security and human rights.

The focus of the Summit was fostering freedom of religion and belief as a tool for fostering peace, security and human rights. The connection between atrocity crimes, for which we mean genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, as well as violent extremism was explored at the Summit.

The Global Summit highlighted the importance of enhancing the synergy between stakeholders which play a fundamental role in fostering peace, security and human rights worldwide. These stakeholders are: Diplomats, Politicians, Religious Leaders, Academics and Civil Society (NGOs) representatives.

In this context, the main objective of the Global Summit was to establish a platform named INTERNATIONAL PLATFORM ON “RELIGION, PEACE AND SECURITY” aimed at connecting the various stakeholders aforementioned, as well as enhancing their cooperation on matters related to peace, security and human rights. The Platform on Religion, Peace and Security aims at supporting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals and in particular Goals 16 and 17, which call for “Peace, Justice and strong institutions”. There is no doubt that the achievement of these goals requires better cooperation among different stakeholders and a partnership which needs to be built on a shared vision, which places the respect of fundamental principles and values at its core.

The Global Summit discussed how these different actors can effectively work together and complement each other’s work. In addition, the Summit provided an opportunity for participants to share information, experiences, expertise, best practices and lessons learned on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, fostering respect for religious freedom and promoting resilience to atrocity crimes and violent extremism.

Based on three days of discussion, We, the participants to the Global Summit acknowledge the following:

- There is increasing awareness that religion can play a role in intolerance, conflicts, atrocity crimes and violent extremism. In a nutshell, religion matters,
- There is also a growing openness and readiness of political as well as religious forces in being involved in issues linked to religion or the abuse and manipulation thereof,
- There is an impressive number of activities by religious institutions and faith-based organizations that are

¹ Special thanks to the United Nations and in particular to the OGPRtP - an excellent co-organizer with the AIDLR of the Global Summit, and thanks also to all the cosponsors (EU, Spain) and supporters (Foundation Pro Vivere Dignum, Maurer Immobiliare, ADRA, WCC, IIRF).

implemented at local, national, and regional level aimed at fostering human rights, peace and security. These activities needs to be better known and publicized local as they are at the core of conflict prevention and transformation, as well as prevention of atrocity crimes and violent extremism.

We, the participants to the Global Summit also proposes the following:

- The Summit on Religion, Peace and Security should take place on a yearly basis and focus each year on a relevant issue. A steering committee, composed of representative of the five stakeholders aforementioned, and diverse in terms of gender and religious affiliation, should be established to conceptualize and organize next summit,
- Clear and detailed terms of reference for this Steering Committee should be developed and disseminated among the Global Summit participants.

On behalf of the participants,

Adama Dieng,

Under-Secretary-General, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General of United Nations on the Prevention of Genocide

Liviu Olteanu,

Secretary General of the AIDLR, Doctor of Law on United Nations Diplomacy in Action for Protecting Human Rights and Religious Liberty

B. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Geneva 25 November 2016

From the outset, allow me to thank the **International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty** (AIDLR) and all the co-sponsors (EU, Spain) for putting together this timely conference. My warm thanks also to all the panelists for accepting to speak in this conference and for their most valuable contributions to the discussion. I am so pleased with the global profile of this conference as shown through the diversity of the participants who came literally from all around the world.

Dear friends,

At this point in the conference the discussions, the speeches are behind us. You have grappled with the many issues energetically and forcefully. Perhaps, at this point, you are a little tired. Perhaps the Declaration we just adopted is all that stands between you and a few days of well-deserved rest and relaxation if at all possible. Under these circumstances, I would like nothing more to congratulating you on a job well done, to congratulate you all for the conclusion of our Global Summit with such a successful outcome.

A special word of gratitude and warm congratulations to Dr. Liviu Olteanu who has invested so much time, energy and efforts in bringing to fruition in a such short period an idea which he shared with me last May in Madrid.

As we noticed through the various conclusions presented by our rapporteurs there is a lot that has been achieved but also a lot ahead of us to do. The Global Summit has revealed how much unites us and how vital it is to learn from each other, and how different actors, including diplomats, politicians, international organizations, religious leaders and the wider civil society can work together, concretely, in common cause, to build – and develop - national, regional and international architectures aimed to address successfully the challenges to peace, security and human rights, and in particular to freedom of religion of belief. These challenges include atrocity crimes or the risk thereof in many

countries, as well as terrorism and violent extremism.

In this regard, Sheik Al Yaqoobi made a urgent call to solve the Syrian conflict. I was pleased that many of you shared good practices and lessons learned to address these challenges. In this context, Rabbi Melchior briefed us about progresses made in recent years in interfaith dialogue among radical Jewish and Muslim religious leaders as a tool to contribute to peace and security in Israel and Occupied Palestinian Territory. We were moved by the conditions of the Sikh community in India and the need to prevent further violence against them. I also cannot but join Azza Karam in paying tribute to Aziza Baroud, Amsatou Sow Sidibe and Reama Kasule for the great work they are accomplishing in our Mother Africa, the cradle of Humanity. The words of Aziza Baroud still resonate in relation to the place and the important role of the Youth who are a key actor for any success to be achieved in the 'Dialogue Five' Platform.

Dear friends,

I challenge you to have the courage to take the extra step and take back home with you for further discussion and implementation not only the ideas, messages and projects that are easy to accept, but also the novel ideas, messages and projects that, on first glance, may raise eyebrows or be criticized, but that you feel may mark yet another advancement in the path towards sustained economic growth, respect for human rights, and upholding the principles of good governance and the strengthening of justice.

To conclude let me emphasize that this Summit, and its outcome in particular - the creation of the platform of different actors who can contribute to peace, security and human rights - fits well within my mandate and the program my Office is running on the role of religious leaders in preventing incitement to violence. Indeed, incitement to violence is not only a violation of human rights but it is also an international crime. Moreover, incitement is an indicator and trigger of violence, including of atrocity crimes, and is used to encourage violent extremism and terrorist action.

This platform, once it has been established, will contribute to better coordination and partnership of all actors involved in sustaining peace. Putting together this platform is not an easy task. In this regard, the organizers of our Conference will spare no efforts to conceptualize it in detail. It is a huge endeavor and one that will need time as well as human and financial resources. I personally will offer my strong support to this platform, once it is clearer how it will be shaped. I have no doubt that you will agree with me that this conference represents the beginning of a powerful and much needed cooperation among different actors active in enhancing human rights, peace and security worldwide.

Brothers and sisters in Humanity,

Preventing atrocity crimes and their incitement, addressing violent extremism and building sustaining peace is a shared responsibility and that I hope that after having discussed and debated these issues in this conference room for three days we can all commit on working together and concretize our promise.

I wish you a safe journey back home and may the Almighty God bless all of us much abundantly.

Adama Dieng,

Under-Secretary-General, Special Adviser to the Secretary General of United Nations on the Prevention of Genocide
