

PRESS RELEASE

Religious leaders and actors welcome Interfaith Statement on the Victims and Survivors of ISIL

16 July 2020 – More than 150 religious actors and prominent leaders today welcomed the momentous step taken by the representatives of the Christian, Kakai, Shia, Sunni and Yazidi communities in Iraq through the adoption of an Inter-Faith Statement on the Victims and Survivors of ISIL in March 2020. This was convened as part of a virtual conference hosted jointly by the Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, the UN Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for the Crimes committed by Da’esh/ISIL (UNITAD) and Religions for Peace.

The global faith communities welcomed the landmark [Statement](#) in which the leaders of all major faiths in Iraq collectively denounced the acts of ISIL and underlined their full support to victims, survivors and families, while reiterating their commitment to provide all possible support to ensure that those responsible for their crimes are held accountable. The webinar also discussed the role of religious leaders and actors from Iraq and the other countries in promoting wider national and international accountability efforts for the crimes committed by ISIL and other groups in Iraq and contributing to prevention of atrocity crimes and peaceful, inclusive and just societies.

The event brought together signatories to the Statement as well as religious leaders from a wide range of other Member States, in order to reflect on how the principles included in the document can be converted into action and the moral force of religious actors globally can be harnessed in combatting violent extremism and atrocity crimes. Participants underlined their united rejection of the violence of ISIL and emphasized the importance of all religious communities in Iraq, and globally, to strengthen their dialogue and cooperation in order to promote understanding, address the legacy of ISIL crimes and prevent atrocity crimes. All participants also underlined the need for those responsible for ISIL crimes to be held accountable in accordance with the rule of law in order to establish a basis for reconciliation and peace.

Special Adviser Khan, Head of UNITAD, underlined that the Interfaith Statement represents “a powerful example of how the unity of faith leaders can be used to expose the acts of ISIL as contrary to the basic principles of humanity and devoid of any foundation in faith. This unified rejection of their ideology must serve as an example globally of how religious leaders can play a fundamental role in preventing the spread of violent extremism”.

“Iraqi society has experienced the tremendous cost of not addressing long-term grievances. It must therefore work to build and strengthen an inclusive society where diversity is not perceived as a flaw but as an asset. I am convinced that the Interfaith Statement on in Iraq constitutes an essential step in this direction,” Special Adviser Dieng stated.

“Religious leaders have an unparalleled moral voice, their combined statement and intent, can - and will - reroute the trajectory of humanity towards healing and peaceful coexistence in our world” Secretary-General of Religions for Peace, Prof. Dr. Karam said.

The webinar represents the first step in the process of implementing the Interfaith Statement on the Victims and Survivors of ISIL. This will be followed by an event in Baghdad, to be organized later in the year.

Questions by the media can be address to:

OSAPG: Jean Victor Nkolo (nkolo@un.org)

UNITAD: Georges Fakhry (georges.fakhry@un.org)

Religions for Peace: Mary Grace Donohoe (mgdonohoe@rfp.org)