

# Statement Of H.E. Prof. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Secretary General Of The OIC At The 4th Meeting Of The Group Of Friends Of The Syrian People

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Marrakech, 12 December 2012-12-12 Bismillahi Arrahmani Arrahim In the Name of God, Most Compassionate, Most Merciful H.E. Mr. Saad dine Al Othmani, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Morocco, Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Heads of Delegation, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, It is a great honor and privilege for me to address the 4th Meeting of the Group of Friends of the Syrian People convened in the beautiful city of Marrakech to discuss the current situation in Syria and find ways and means to save the Syrian people and end their untold sufferings through our collective actions. At the very outset, I would like to seize this opportunity to thank the Moroccan Government for convening this important meeting and for the excellent arrangements and hospitality accorded to the visiting delegations. Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Delegates, In spite of the collective and continuous efforts exerted by the international community to resolve the Syrian crisis, I have no doubt that you would share my deep concern and profound pain at what the situation there has turned into, with the ongoing bloodshed, the indiscriminate killing of innocent lives including children and women and the large scale destruction of homes and infrastructure. As we gather here today to examine this deplorable situation, we are reminded of the calamities endured by a people steeped in history who have suffered all kinds of killing, mutilation, torture and dispersion as a result of the mindless violence being inflicted upon them. Moreover, the current situation could be an ominous portend of the breakout of a civil war that might crush even more thousands of innocent victims, with ripple effects reaching even beyond Syria, to all the

countries of the region. Our duty now commands that we extend our urgent succor to the victims of the violence. In this respect, as Secretary General of the OIC, I have issued repeated calls for an end to the killings in Syria, calls which take root in the precepts of Islam that insist on the protection of the human life, enjoins its preservation and prohibits the killing of the innocent or their subjection to any harm. Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Since the onset of this crisis, we made a point of abiding by the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of a Member State of the OIC, and of respecting its sovereignty and territorial integrity, a principled stand which was coupled by our keenness to preserve Syrian's people safety and security. However, the degrading security situation and worsened oppressive practices with the killing of large numbers of children and women have played in favour of internationalization of the crisis. I had talks and contacts with the authorities in Damascus and expressed my concerned over the potential spread of the crisis, and encouraged the Syrian authorities to respond to the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people for democracy and reforms. I dispatched a Special envoy to Damascus in May 2011 to deliver a written message to President Bashar Al-Assad. In my message, 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, implement the reforms promised by the Syrian leadership and resolve the Syrian crisis through peaceful means. Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Participants, In the Final Communiqué of the 4th Extraordinary Summit convened on 14-15 August in the holy city of Makkah Al-Mukarramah, the Heads of States and Governments from the OIC member States examined the Syrian crisis in detail and stated that: Quote "The Conference stresses the need to preserve Syria's unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity; strongly condemns the ongoing bloodshed in Syria and underlines the Syrian regime's responsibility for the continued violence and destruction of property. The Conference expresses grave concern over the deteriorating situation, the increasing frequency of killings, which claimed the lives of thousands of unarmed civilians, and the perpetration of massacres in towns and villages by the Syrian authorities." Unquote To put more pressure on the Syrian regime the Conference suspended the Syrian Arab Republic's membership in the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and all its subsidiary organs, specialised and affiliated institutions. The Thirty-ninth Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers held in Djibouti, Republic of Djibouti on 15-17 November 2012 welcomed the United Nations General Assembly resolution of 3 August 2012 on the situation in Syria, which strongly condemned the continued, widespread and systematic violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms by the Syrian authorities, the use of force against civilians, and arbitrary assassination, killing and oppression; and called for the commencement of immediate implementation of the transitional phase plan and the development of a peaceful mechanisms that would allow building a new Syrian State based on pluralism, democratic and civilian system where there would be an equality on the basis of law, citizenship and fundamental freedoms. The meeting also called on the Security Council to assume fully its responsibility by stopping the ongoing violence and bloodshed in Syria and finding a peaceful and lasting solution to the Syrian crisis. Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to reiterate the OIC full support to the efforts of Mr. Lakhdar Al-Ibrahimi Joint Special Representative of the United Nations and

the League of Arab States for Syria. The OIC welcomes the recent Syrian opposition factions' signature of an agreement in Doha to create an umbrella organization. This would pave the way for uniting the Syrian opposition and its recognition by the international community. Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, To conclude, I wish to call upon the international community to work more actively towards ending immediately the bloodshed in Syria and to stop the ordeal of the Syrian people. I wish our deliberations every success in evolving specific recommendations which will contribute to finding a prompt solution to the grave Syrian crisis. I thank you all for your kind attention.

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