

Ihsanoglu Warns Against Regional Impact of Possible Civil War in Syria

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Prof. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), warned that the current situation in Syria presages a civil war outbreak which could crush thousands more of innocent lives and whose impact could overspill to all the countries of the region. In his address to the ministerial-level Extraordinary Meeting of the OIC Executive Committee, convened at the OIC General Secretariat headquarters in Jeddah on Sunday 24th June 2012, Prof. Ihsanoglu expressed his profound concern, pain and sorrow at the turn of events in Syria. He said that, with the approach of the Holy month of Ramadhan and the sacred months during which Allah has forbidden warring, the shedding of innocent blood becomes even more reprehensible, in view of the particular noble status which God has assigned for these months of the year. Ihsanoglu added that he felt duty-bound to appeal to the Syrian scholars (Ulema) in particular to urge people to observe the sanctity of these months. Ihsanoglu further noted that the OIC had made a point from the outset to avoid interference in a Member State's domestic affairs, to be respectful of its sovereignty and territorial integrity, and to reject the internationalization of the crisis, in the hope of achieving a permanent solution within the framework of the Arabo-Islamic world. However, he indicated, the exacerbated security situation, the nature of the repressive practices, and the killing of so many children and women, have played for the internationalization of the crisis. The Secretary General underlined that, for any crisis to be overcome, the parties concerned must demonstrate openness, readiness to work towards a peaceful solution, and a will to strive for reconciliation. He laid a particular stress on the need for international action in the area of conflict resolution to be driven by constructive cooperation instead of rivalries and the cold-war approach which cannot bear positive results. On another front, Ihsanoglu renewed his apprehensions concerning the agreement which the Holy See in the Vatican is negotiating with Israel regarding the economic, financial and real-estate properties of the Catholic Church in Palestine, and affirmed at the same time the OIC's continued contacts in this regard with a number of international parties to secure the Vatican's

upholding of its principled commitment on the mater. In concluding his remarks, Ihsanoglu articulated the view that the meeting which was convened to examine the serious developments in Palestine, Syria, Sudan and Mali, was banking on a last chance to find an optimal way out of these difficulties.

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