



29 March 2006
London

Religions for Peace - Iraq

**The Role of Religious Leaders
In
Social Reconstruction and Nation Building**

(A conference for religious leaders from Iraq was hosted in London from 26-29 March 2006 by the World Conference of *Religions for Peace*)

We, Iraqi religious leaders (the conferees), met to discuss the current developments and the means to confront violence in Iraq, the victims of which are so many of our innocent people. We discussed the responsibility of religious leaders – through joint co-operation based on the humane principles that all religions call for - to lay the foundations for security and stability; to strengthen the sense of brotherhood, love and co-existence among the Iraqi people; and to secure the future for coming generations on the basis of unity and a nationalism that serve all sectors of Iraqi society while confirming the many shared characteristics that combine them.

We confirm the historical role of Iraq as the cradle of civilisation and the point where civilisations meet, and that people from all ethnic, religious and tribal backgrounds have the right to live in peace, security, dignity and prosperity.

We call for maintaining the high ethical standards that hold sacred life, property and honour, while stressing that the sanctity of innocent human souls is greater than the sanctity of the Kaaba (in Mecca).

The general atmosphere of our conference was dominated by the true love and openness that Iraqis have always adopted to solve their problems, through accepting others' opinions in order to stand united in confronting all forms of violence and terrorism and to resent accusing others of atheism.

Based on these values, our conference approved the following principles:

First:

We are saddened that the world has not become safer and more stable over the past three years, but rather that the current circumstances show that there is lack of respect for human dignity.

Second:

We confirm the principal requirements for solving the crisis in Iraq:

- 1- The need to form a powerful government and a strong, balanced army capable of securing the country's sovereignty
- 2- The need to differentiate between terrorist acts, murder, sabotage and forced migration on the one hand and legitimate resistance, in accordance with international law, to any occupation
- 3- The need to reject – very strongly – accusing some Iraqis of atheism, proscribing them, violating their dignity and attacking their shrines. We are united in confronting these criminal acts, whether they are launched from within Iraq or from abroad.
- 4- The significance of a fair and balanced national economy in solving the current crisis as set out by the Constitution for a fair society that focuses on equity, giving, and altruism.
- 5- The recognition that Iraq is for all Iraqis and that the things that unite them are far more than those that divide them.

Third:

The conferees suggest fulfilling the goals above, through:

- 1- Maintaining dialogue amongst various religious, faith and ethnic leaders by holding regular conferences, carrying out visits; forming peace teams to visit trouble areas and holding public gatherings that bring together all sects in public events.
- 2- Emphasising in religious sermons the need to: increase the spirit of tolerance and forgiveness, reject all forms of violence and extremism, confirm the sanctity and dignity of Iraqi citizens, and criminalize all those who provide help to those who commit crime.
- 3- Strengthening the culture of “acknowledging others” and benefiting from the achievements of others.
- 4- Confronting, very firmly, those who try to foment strife by using the mass media; confronting those who bring evil on our people; and declaring that we are united in order to deter those who have ambitions in Iraq.
- 5- Deepening the religious spirit in the development of civil society in order to achieve the highest social, economic, cultural and political standards for our people.
- 6- Convening a widely inclusive conference in Iraq which will bring together all religious leaders, so that everybody bears their responsibilities, in word and deed. (As recommended by the previous meetings through the activation of the Iraqi *Council of Religions for Peace*).
- 7- Stressing the sanctity of sacred places, whether they be shrines, mosques, husainiyas (for the Shiite), churches and other places of worship, and the importance of providing protection for such places and their congregations.
- 8- Calling on humanitarian voluntary organisations to help the Iraqi people in scientific training and the development of their scientific and medical expertise, through fellowships and scholarships - the lack of which leads to the migration of intellectuals.

Fourth:

We thank the World Conference of *Religion for Peace* for working with the Iraqi religious leaders through the past three years, and for all the facilities they have provided in support of this dialogue. We ask that this support continue, with our (common) efforts in the provision of humanitarian services, until we see the Iraqi people recover and overcome the crises surrounding them.

Fifth:

We, the signatories below, are committed to what is set out in this document, and consider that this is the only way to heal the suffering of Iraqis from all sectarianism:

1. Seyed Hassan Bahr Al-Uloum. Representing Grand Ayatollah Sayed Mohammad Saeed Al-Hakeem and Grand Ayatollah Sheikh Mohammad Izhaq Al-Fayadh
2. Seyed Salih Al-Haydary. Head (Minister) of the Shiite Endowment Diwan in Iraq
3. Seyed Jaafar Abdul Saheb Al-Hakim. Representing Seyed Abdul Aziz Al-Hakim
4. Seyed Adel Al-Yasseri. Representing Ayatollah Sheikh Mohammad Al-Yaaqubi
5. Seyed Fadhil Hussein Al-Milani. Representing Imam Al-Khoei Foundation in London
6. Sheikh Abbas Raheema Dadheel Al-Zaidey, Representing Seyed Muqtada Al Sadr
7. Dr. Sheikh Ahmad Abdul Gafour Al-Samarao. Head (Minister) of Sunni Endowment Diwan in Iraq
8. Dr. Sheikh Harith Al-'Obaydey. Lecturer, Baghdad University
9. Dr Sheikh Abdul Salam Al-Kubeisy. Representing Muslim Umma Council in Iraq
10. Sheikh Majed Al-Hafeed. Representing Kurdistan Clerics Union
11. Sheikh Tahseen Hama Shams Aldeen. Representing Kurdistan Islamic Union
12. Dr. Sheikh Mahmoud Khalaf Jarad. Imam of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Al-Gailanii Mosque in Iraq
13. Archbishop Andrawes. Representing His Beatitude Patriarch Dely III of the Chaldean Catholic Church in Iraq
14. Archbishop Avak Asadour Asadorian. Head of the Armenian Orthodox Church in Iraq
15. Dr Nabeel Yasseen. Academic and Researcher.

From the World Council of *Religions for Peace*

HRH Prince El Hassan Bin Talal, Moderator, *Religions for Peace*

Bishop Gunnar Stålsett, Moderator, European Council of Religious Leaders – *Religions for Peace*

Dr. William F. Vendley, Secretary General, *Religions for Peace*

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Mrs. Christina Lee Brown, Trustee, *Religions for Peace*

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