MADRID INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE VICTIMS OF ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Co-Chairs’ Summary

24 May 2017

The Conference which brought together 59 countries and 10 international and regional organizations, discussed the efforts needed to support the members of the communities who are targeted by Daesh and other terrorist organizations for ethnic or religious reasons, particularly, in Iraq.

The Madrid Conference is a continuation of the open debate held by the UN Security Council on 27 March 2015 and the Conference held in Paris on 8 September 2015 on the victims of ethnic and religious violence in the Middle East which was co-chaired by Jordan and France. At the Paris Conference, an Action Plan was presented which set forth a roadmap for the international community to support those who are persecuted for ethnic or religious reasons, highlighting three priorities:

- **Humanitarian priorities.** To respond to the immediate needs of people in danger. To prepare and to facilitate the voluntary and lasting return of displaced persons, under safe conditions.

- **Political priorities.** To promote political solutions that are inclusive and respectful of human rights for all, regardless of their ethnic or religious origin, and preserve the cultural diversity of the Middle East.

- **Judicial priorities.** To put an end to the impunity of persons who have perpetrated crimes - some of which may constitute war crimes or crimes against humanity or even genocide - against people on the grounds of their ethnic or religious origin.

The participants reiterated their support to the co-chairs conclusions and the Action Plan of the Paris Conference, as a viable tool to address the dramatic situation of persons belonging to communities targeted by Da’esh, and other terrorist organizations, and to preserve those communities and cultures whose existence is threatened by terrorist groups in Iraq and Syria.

The aim of the Madrid Conference was to take stock of what had been done to date from the Action Plan and, mainly, to determine which priorities are currently most urgent, taking into account the situation on the ground in particular in Iraq, as well as identifying programs,
projects and actions, in consistence with the needs of the Iraqi government, to enable displaced populations to return to their home lands and to foster reconciliation and stabilization efforts, in cooperation with the already existing mechanisms that deal with the stabilization efforts.

In this regard, the participants commended the prominent achievements by the Iraqi army in liberating Mosul and other governorates, and areas in Iraq from terrorists; supported all the efforts aimed at restoring safety and security to Iraq, and achieving national reconciliation through a political process that sustains the state of citizenship and ensures justice and equality to all the components of Iraqi people on a stable and secure nation without exclusion or discrimination.

GENERAL POLITICAL POSITIONS

The participants emphasized that for the region, the cultural, religious and ethnic diversity of the Middle East represented a priceless heritage, and should be preserved. To this end, practical programmes should be adopted to achieve progress in crises settlement efforts, achieve sustainable development, create opportunities, establish values of democracy, human rights, citizenship and equality, which shall enhance the collective national identity and protect the national state and prevents racial and sectarian disintegration towards a region of peace, enlightenment and prosperity. Terrorist organizations like Daesh which is promoting religious and ethnic hatred, are committing the worst kind of atrocities and human rights abuses – of which Muslim populations are their first victims. The participants expressed their determination to redouble their efforts to restore peace and support all refugees and displaced persons, as well the countries that host them. The contributions of those countries were praised, and they furthermore should be supported.

They agreed that a key goal of the international community and the countries concerned is to facilitate the return of refugees and displaced persons to their home lands, by creating a conducive environment for their return. The ongoing efforts exerted by the international coalition against Daesh were praised.

PRIORITY AREAS

Some participants presented the actions and programs that had been implemented since the presentation of the Paris Action Plan. Given the situation on the ground, humanitarian assistance to the displaced populations had been an important priority.
In this context, a number of priorities and projects were identified on which work can be done in the short and medium term, and which translated into specific commitments from participants.

The participants were invited to draw on the Paris Action Plan and the Madrid Priorities, which are annexed, to carry out concrete actions ahead of the follow-up conference, announced for 2018 by the Government of Belgium.

Alfonso Dastis, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Spain
Ayman Safadi, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.