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**Keynote Released at the OSCE/ ODIHR by Dr. Liviu Olteanu,
Secretary General,
International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty (AIDLR)
Bern Switzerland**

Working Session 12 & 13

**A SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS,
FIGHTING TERRORISM, THE RIGHT TO A FAIR TRIAL AND
DEMOCRATIC LAW-MAKING**

Warsaw, 19 of September 2017

I thank you Moderator,

Excellences, ladies and gentlemen,

I'm Liviu Olteanu the Secretary General of the International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty – Association internationale pour la défense de la liberté religieuse (AIDLR) that has its headquarters in Bern Switzerland, and having an active collaboration with the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva and the United Nations Office of Genocide Prevention from New York on prevention of the incitement to violence and genocide prevention. The International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty has been founded 71 years ago in 1946 by Dr. Jean Nussbaum and with the support of Eleanor Roosevelt that became the first President of Honorary Committee of our organization. The AIDLR is an active international defender of human rights, peace and security, and is giving a special attention to the defense of principle of freedom of religious or belief for all people, everywhere.

Excellences, distinguished guests and colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

Today more than ever the people are challenged in their daily life with the issue of insecurity, persecution and torture, terrorism and international crisis. Many times the concerned issues are regarding the hate speech, religious hatred, discrimination of religious minorities and its followers, right of a fair trial, or violence in the name of religion that can affect directly the religious minorities.

Only in the last months have been organized interested international conferences on **“Prevention of incitement to violence and prevention of genocide”, “Religious freedom and Pacific Co-existence”** and **“Hate speech and Security”**; the first meeting has been hosted in July 14, 2017 at the UN Headquarters

in New York where the Secretary General of the UN **Antonio Guterres launched the Plan of Action for Religious Leaders and Actors to Prevent Incitement to Violence that Could Lead to Atrocity Crimes**. This excellent and necessary Plan of Action was initiated by the UN Office of Genocide Prevention by Adama Dieng the Under-Secretary-General Special Adviser of the UN Secretary General on Prevention of Genocide. The second event has been hosted in Ft. Lauderdale Florida and organized by the **International Religious Liberty Association (IRLA) and the Headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist Church** on “Religious Freedom and Hope for Peaceful Co-existence”. One of its resolution included a commitment to “encourage national and international actors to avoid stereotyping of any groups or individuals based on prejudices, preconceptions, or assumptions;” and also to “encourage religious and other leaders to recognize the danger of religion being hijacked and misused for non-religious goals.”. The third international conference has been organized **Under the Auspices of Italian Presidency of G7 by Consiglio Nazionale Forense** and the President Andrea Mascherin stressed on “ the necessity that international actors, specially the lawyers and the national Bar of Laws to join their efforts on working together taking attitude against hate speech and security.

As I expressed at the first and to the third meeting in New York and in Rome, because the world today is different and plural and it is a world of religion, tradition and culture and the international issues are so complex, we need to activate a new approach on protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms and with a special attention to religious minorities. According with Robert Seiple the first American Ambassador At-Large on Religious Freedom: “The governments that ignore the religious liberty of the minorities or discriminate against them, cannot obtain security for the majority”. And to formulate it in positive words - according to Heiner Bielefeldt - safeguarding the human rights of minorities constitutes a crucial part of a society’s common good and fosters a healthy development of democracy.

In this context those that do not take religion into account for their analysis of contemporary issues, assume great danger. The Member States have to support the right of journalists and other actors “to criticize authority and criticize religion” that is a normal and a good sign of one democratic country. Thorbjorn JAGLAND said: “We have come to understand that democracy is by definition pluralist and that giving citizens the right to be different and to criticize authority makes our countries more stable, not less” .

Antonio GUTERRES, the Secretary General of the United Nations, underlined in New York on 14 of July: “Around the world we see the *religion* how is being twisted cynically, manipulated to justify incitement to violence and discrimination, and an alarming rise online and offline of hate speech messages that spread hostility and hatred and encourage populations to commit violence against individuals or communities often based on an identity. Hate speech seeds suspicion, mistrust and intolerance”.

In the context of the topic debated today, permit me to propose to the OSCE/ ODIHR to give a special attention to the forward issues:

- 1. Tackling societal root-causes: discrimination and equality, racism, negative stereotypes and prejudice, lack of prudence and populism and utilization of religion for political gains.**

2. **Members States to be encouraged regarding integration and respect for differences of every human being while respecting one's own cultural identity, in this way will be discouraged the hate speech, religious hatred, violence, discrimination of all people, that specially affect the religious minorities.**
3. **To combat stereotypes, it should only be restricted through criminal offences following the principles of legality, proportionality and necessity.**
4. **Member States to have a clear separation between the political and spiritual aspects, condemning the repressive and arbitrary laws on discrimination based on religion and cultural identity. Also, the secular countries to be prudent on the religious expressions and signs that may be restricted without a clear public interest justification and end up negatively affecting the enjoyment of other rights as well.**
5. **Member States to be monitored not to use 'extremism' and 'national security' as multipurpose tool and pretext or political abuse against religious groups and minorities, dissidents and political opponents."**

Concluding,

The governments do not discriminate journalists, social media and religious or beliefs minorities, and not to manifest discrimination, intolerance and persecution against the freedom of conscience of the persons, which are different that themselves, and have to give a special attention to the 'right to a fair trial' a every human being, respecting the dignity of every person.

Nations and people need to develop a deeper understanding of the religious and philosophical conceptions of other civilizations, religions, cultures and teaching to live with differences, protecting for one side the civil security and for other side fundamental freedoms.

I thank you.

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