

O.S.C.E. HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING

22 September to 3 October 2014

The International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty (AIDLR) from
Switzerland to the O.S.C.E. participating States and to the
International Community

**URGENT APPEAL: LET'S US WORK FOR NO MORE INTOLERANCE,
DISCRIMINATION AND PERSECUTION IN OSCE REGION AND WORLDWIDE**

Working Session 13 - Tolerance and non-discrimination including combating
racism, xenophobia and discrimination,
also focusing on intolerance on religious grounds

30 September 2014
Warsaw, Poland

Mr. President,
Excellences,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE DEFENSE OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY (AIDLR) from Switzerland by its Secretary General Liviu OLTEANU, first of all congratulates the presidency of O.S.C.E. for its efforts, influence and sacrifice in favor of human rights and religious freedom in our region and in the worldwide.

2. Worldwide and in our region too the status of religious freedom continues to decline. We can learn from our past that religious freedom can contribute to the long-term solution. The OSCE participating States cannot forget that the religious freedom *is the first freedom*, necessary for the success of individuals and societies, everywhere. According to the scholar Thomas Farr, some key sources of decline of religious freedom, of intolerance, discrimination and persecution are: violent Islamist extremism, totalitarian Communism, religious nationalism and the terrorism who use a religious name.

Mr. President

3. The AIDLR stresses that racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, intolerance, discrimination and persecution against Christians, Jews, Muslims and members of other religions and religious minorities, affect peace, security and life of all people and represent probably one of the biggest threats to stability in the OSCE region and in the entire world.

4. Religious hatred, xenophobic discourse in public life, populist or extremist parties in Europe, wars, terrorism and tragedies, which affect innocent people in Ukraine, Middle East and North Africa - especially in Iraq and Syria, or in Nigeria, North Korea - by terrorist actions of so-called Islamic States

and Boko Haram, etc. - urgently need to be stopped by strong and coordinated efforts of the international and regional organizations as the United Nations, the European Union, the Council of Europe and the OSCE participating States.

5. The AIDLR underlines that intolerance, discrimination, persecution and extremism, easily can affect the individuals and communities of different religions (Jews, Muslims, Christians, etc.), **churches and religious minorities** (Baptists and Seventh Day-Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Baha'is, or in some places the minorities of the big churches (Orthodox, Catholic, Protestants, etc.) throughout the OSCE region and in the entire world. The equality in rights and responsibilities of all religions, churches and religious minorities, and protection of all persons against any discrimination on any ground, always has to be a PRIORITY for the OSCE participating States.

6. The AIDLR believes that respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and the respect for human rights and freedom of religion and belief according to one's conscience are values that serve as the foundations of mutual respect and civilized society and has to represent for the OSCE participating States a priority and urgency.

7. The kidnapping of women and children and the killing of Christians and innocent people in Iraq, Syria -and no matter where in the world- have reached in the XXI Century an unprecedented gravity, and we strongly condemn religious hatred, intolerance, all kind of religious discrimination, persecution and terrorism.

8. The AIDLR strongly agrees with the UN Security Council that the widespread and systematic attacks directed against any civilian populations because of their religion, belief, ethnic or political background, constitute a crime against humanity and the AIDLR asks the OSCE participating states to be involved together with the international community to act with determination and strong will and by coordinated response stop the tragedy afflicting innocent people and religious communities in Ukraine, and -why not-, in Iraq and Syria, in Nigeria, Pakistan and North Korea and in other parts of the world.

9. Especially we congratulate the governments of the United States of America (president B. Obama), **Canada, Norway, Switzerland, Finland, Spain** (general director and deputy director of the Ministry of Justice, Ricardo Garcia-Garcia, Ambassador Belen Alfaro of Ministry of Foreign Affairs), **Romania** (Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Corlateanu), and **the Council of Europe** (Secretary General of COE Mr. T. Jagland and Ambassador P. Dumitriu at UN in Geneva) for their special efforts regarding the education and defense of religious freedom at national, regional or international level.

10. Also the AIDLR invites the OSCE participating states to do research and to evaluate carefully the OSCE region on 'Government restriction on religion'

and '***Social hostilities regarding religion***'. According to Pew Research at "high" and "very high" levels of restriction: there are 10 countries; at "moderate" level: 15 countries. 'Social hostilities regarding religion': at "very high" and "high" categories there are 18 countries and with "moderate" social hostilities we see 13 countries of the OSCE region. Do you know which country that belongs to the OSCE region has the important position in both rankings? You will not be surprised when discovering this country. Concerning data!

Mr. President
Ladies and Gentlemen

11. The AIDLR expresses its commitment and support to the initiatives of the OSCE that will contribute to get peace and stability in the region and in the world, and according to our expertise, we stress -as a priority- the need to defend and to protect freedom of conscience and principle of religion freedom for all people and in all countries belonging to the OSCE region.

I thank you Mr. President!