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**STATEMENT BY
HIS EXCELLENCY AMBASSADOR MOHAMED BENHOCINE,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ALGERIA IN VIENNA
AND HEAD OF THE ALGERIAN DELEGATION, AT THE
TWENTY-SECOND MEETING OF THE
OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Belgrade, 3 and 4 December 2015

Mr. Chairperson,

Allow me to begin by offering our condolences to the United States of America and to the families of the victims following the tragedy that occurred in San Bernardino.

First and foremost, I should like to pay tribute to Serbia, which has shown all the necessary commitment in carrying out its duties as the OSCE Chairmanship this year. I should also like to thank the Serbian authorities for the warm welcome they have given us, for the excellent organization and for the resources made available to ensure the success of this annual OSCE Ministerial Council meeting.

In that connection, allow me also to thank Germany, which chaired the OSCE Mediterranean Contact Group this year in an exemplary fashion, and to wish it every success for its forthcoming OSCE Chairmanship in 2016. I should also like to assure the incoming chair of the Contact Group, Austria, of our full support.

Finally, I thank the OSCE Secretary General and his staff for the excellent preparation of this meeting.

Mr. Chairperson,

Our meeting coincides with the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, which today is still the fundamental document on which the OSCE's work and its co-operation with us, the Mediterranean Partners, are based.

Indeed, the Helsinki Final Act stated 40 years ago that "security in Europe ... is closely linked with security in the Mediterranean area".

This close connection is more relevant than ever today, given the worrying evolution of the security situation in the Mediterranean region and its direct repercussions on the European area as a whole.

In these times of great uncertainty troubling our region, the challenges we face are tremendous and require of us regular dialogue to find effective joint solutions in keeping with the aspirations of those living on both sides of the Mediterranean.

Whether the issue at hand is terrorism, transnational organized crime or trafficking in drugs or arms, there are many reasons for strengthening political dialogue and co-operation with the OSCE. It is for that reason that we would like here to reaffirm our commitment to implementing the Partnership for Co-operation between us, the Mediterranean countries, and the OSCE, on the basis of our common interests and mutual benefits.

Mr. Chairperson,

More than ever, terrorism is an evil the international community must rid itself of.

At this juncture, we should like to offer our sincere condolences to all countries the world over that have recently faced the savagery of terrorism.

Mr. Chairperson,

In combating terrorism, my country continues its commitment through the various regional and international platforms for opposing all forms of radicalization. In that context, an international conference on violent extremism and radicalization with the participation of 70 States was held in Algiers in July this year, followed a few months later by the global summit on countering violent extremism held on the margins of the 70th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Strengthening dialogue between cultures and civilizations, promoting the values of peace, tolerance and dialogue through educational programmes, and finally cutting off all sources of the financing of terrorism are all actions to be taken to combat terrorism.

We should also prepare to work together to fight Islamophobia, which tries to pit civilizations against one another, and to combat attacks on all religions.

Mr. Chairperson,

The migration crisis, which is primarily a serious humanitarian crisis, needs to be considered from a multidimensional point of view.

In that context, diminishing the hotbeds of war or tension, as well as combating poverty, economic instability and social insecurity are among the essential components of the holistic understanding required to solve this problem.

Mr. Chairperson,

As we have said, there are some relatively new problems such as that of Daesh, and for Europe, the migrant crisis, but none of this should lead us to forget the age-old differences that continue to destabilize the Middle East region as a whole. Here we particularly have in mind the urgent need for a positive response to the legitimate right of the Palestinian people finally to live in freedom and independence.

In that context, the impasse into which Israel has brought the Israeli-Palestinian peace process is a source of grave concern.

Algeria believes that the international community cannot continue to stand idly by in this matter.

Mr. Chairperson,

To conclude, allow me to say a few words about our region, North Africa and the Sahel.

Algeria has real reason to welcome the signature in Bamako on 15 May 2015 of the peace and national reconciliation agreement between the northern Mali region and the central government.

Algeria, which helped in concluding that agreement, hopes that it will allow the reconciled parties in Mali to combat terrorism better and at the same time to focus from now on on the country's development.

In contrast, we are deeply concerned about the situation in Libya, which could become extremely dangerous.

We therefore appeal to the two Libyan governments and all Libyan parties that repudiate terrorism to agree as quickly as possible on the establishment of a government of national unity, which is the only way to have the entire international community on their side.

In that connection, Algeria has been continuing its efforts by hosting inter-Libyan dialogue in Algiers on several occasions. Two days ago, Algeria hosted the seventh meeting of Libya's neighbours to analyse the latest developments in the country, a meeting attended by Mr. Martin Kobler, Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, to whom we offer our full support.

We would stress that this meeting once again reaffirmed the conviction of the member countries that the political solution proposed by the United Nations constitutes a sound basis for resolving the crisis in Libya in a sustainable way.

Thank you for your attention.