

United Nations High Level Forum on Culture of Peace

Promoting Sustainable Culture of Peace: A Global Responsibility,

Keynotes by Liviu Olteanu - New York, 9/9/2014-

Madame President, Excellences,

THE PEACE... STARTS WITH EACH ONE OF US

I'm Liviu Olteanu the Secretary General of the **International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty (AIDLR)** from Switzerland.

I thank to all your Excellences, to worldwide Permanent Representatives to the United Nations, for on-going efforts on behalf of human rights, peace-making, security and trying to stop the terrorism, discrimination and persecution related to religious liberty to international and regional level.

The respect of dignity of every person, protection of fundamental rights and international law and religious liberty according with one's conscience, have to represent for the international community, (UN, EU, COE, OIC), a PRIORITY and an URGENCY. It requires VIGILANCE and EMPATHY, common POLITICAL ATTITUDE and UNEQUIVOCAL MEASURES of ACTION. If not, the tragedies will have no end and the UN delegations will propose and vote each year similar resolutions on the same topic, which practically change nothing. We ask U.N. to start the preparation of one Convention on freedom of religion and belief.

The AIDLR is in favor of the Security Council of UN (UNSC) resolution 2170(2014) on: "Reaffirming that terrorism constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security", "stressing that terrorism can only be defeated by a sustained and comprehensive approach involving the active participation and collaboration of all States, international and regional organizations..."

The AIDLR strongly condemn the religious persecution in all the parts of the world. We are concern how intolerance and discrimination has reached in the XXI Century an unimaginable and unprecedented gravity.

Do we like and want peace, harmony and security? Of course!

TO KEEP AND GET PEACE AND LIBERTY, WE NEED TO TAKE CARE, RECOGNIZING AND PROMOTING:

1. Respect for differences, living with differences and respect and protection of religious minorities

LIBERTY and PEACE can be better understood looking back in the history, but it should to be wise lived, looking forward on HOW DO WE TREAT or we understand people, how do we look to religions, beliefs and cultures.

All people need to develop a deeper understanding of the religious and philosophical conceptions of other culture. The central and most dangerous

dimension of the emerging global policy will be conflict between groups of different civilizations warns and urges **intercultural education**.

2. PEACE means to establish communication and interaction between all Cultures and respect for all Religions, and special for Religious Minorities, without erasing the specific identity of each one of them.

If I do not know the ideas, emotions and hopes of another, **I cannot know** or respect him. Boutros Boutros Ghali said that tolerance is a “*respect for diversity through our common humanity*”.

- a) Often tensions and conflicts quickly escalate due to the perceived lack of respect of one person or group relative to another.
- b) **Respect for differences begins with acknowledging the rights, dignity and perspectives of everyone.** Always we have to learn about other culture and religion.
- c) **PEACE means too to accept things with which you don't agree**, and being respectful of individuals' differences, doesn't mean always agreeing with them.
- d) **PEACE means to look for things that you have in common with the person with whom you have differences and build on these similarities to get unity.** But never we can confuse the unity with the uniformity.

3. PEACE means that governments, diplomats, religious leaders, academia and non-governmental organisations can effectively work together at international, regional and national levels, to promote tolerance and respect for diversity, religion or belief and always defending the human dignity and the principle of freedom of religion for all people.

4. WE CAN CONTRIBUTE BETTER FOR PEACE BY AVOIDING FRAGMENTATION BETWEEN DIFFERENT APPROACHES on human rights and freedom of religion (we have UN approach, EU approach, COE approach, OSCE approach, OIC approach, different national approaches).

The Special Rapporteur of United Nations on freedom of religion or belief Heiner Bielefeldt underlines the **need of coordination of all actors involved in this field of human rights and religious liberty**. For it the International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty created and proposes this holistic framework on freedom of religion with five stakeholders: **Governments, Diplomats, Religious leaders, Academia, Non-Governmental Organizations**.

5. PEACE means EDUCATION and efforts towards common objectives

The **basis of the pedagogy of peace, respect and non-violence, is an EDUCATION in hope and in the growth of freedom**. The proposal of the XXI century is to pass from a culture of fear to the culture of hope.

6. PEACE means RESPECT for HUMAN BEING DIGNITY

Being a *person* is what gives humans a peculiar *dignity*, under **which they cannot be exchanged for a price**.

In conclusion:

According with one UNESCO Statement: If we want peace:

- **Nations, religions, cultures and people have a responsibility** to promote conducts characterized by wisdom, compassion, charity, solidarity and love;
- **We need to assume in our way of thinking that our religions do not have to be identified with any political, economic and social power**, so they can be free to work for justice and peace.
- **We need to promote peace by opposing tendencies of individuals and communities** who believe, or even teach, they are inherently superior to others.
- **We need to promote dialogue and harmony between religions and within each religion.**
- **Rooted in our faith, we want to build a culture of peace** based on non-violence, tolerance, dialogue, mutual understanding and justice.

SPECIAL APPEAL TO THE WORLDWIDE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

1. The AIDLR urges international community, all religions, international NGOs, strongly condemning the religious hatred, intolerance, all kind of religious discrimination, persecution and killing of the Christians and other religious minorities, and all kind of terrorism, in Iraq and Syria and in other parts of the world.

2. International Community to act decisively by coordinated response. Some “stories” have *urgency* and need priority and international community has to act promptly to stop the aggressor. It is necessary to stop the Islamic State genocide and to prevent the further victimization of religious minorities.

3. United Nations Security Council, U.S. and the international community to take all measures as may be appropriate to stop persecution, kidnapping and killing of the Christians and of other religious minorities in Iraq and Syria.

4. The need of international empathy for the other’ crisis, or in other words, trying to put ourselves in the “shoes” of other. Nations tend to look more closely at *crises at home*.

5. PEACE means to keep in mind Jesus’ principle, the golden rule of the Bible: “And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.”¹

The International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty (AIDLR) thanks to you UN delegations in New York and especially to the delegations of U.S. and Romania for their excellent reflections on Peace, presented today here to the Headquarter of U.N.

Thank you Madame President,

Thank you Excellences.

¹ Luke 6:31 English Standard Version