



## Joint Declaration

August 18, 2016 - 15 Dhul-Qa'dah 1437



GATHERED IN THE NAME OF GOD,

We met in Rome this year, which Pope Francis designated a Year of Mercy, to continue our moral and religious dialogue that began in Qom in 2014.

The belief in One God unifies Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Serving God requires working for the welfare of all His creatures and the common good of humanity. Religious leaders must provide moral guidance and speak out against injustice and anything that is harmful to humankind.

Christianity and Islam share a commitment to love and respect for the life, dignity, and welfare of all members of the human community. Both traditions reject transgressions and injustices as reprehensible, and oppose any actions that endanger the life, health, dignity, or welfare of others. We hold a common commitment to peaceful coexistence and mutual respect.

We regard the development and use of weapons of mass destruction and acts of terrorism as immoral. Together we are working for a world without weapons of mass destruction. We call on all nations to reject acquiring such weapons and call on those who possess them to rid themselves of these indiscriminate weapons, including chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons.

For similar reasons, we oppose all acts of terrorism, especially those that directly target innocent civilians, whether the perpetrator is a state, a non-state group, or an individual. We also reject indiscriminate sanctions and other policies that impose harm on innocent civilians, especially the most vulnerable.

We support the legitimate right of self-defense and affirm a nation's right to use proportionate and discriminate force to protect its people against transgression and to restore their rights. We condemn the forced expulsion of people from their homelands and affirm their right to return as well as the international community's responsibility to facilitate a restoration of their rights.

We remain gravely concerned by the spread of extremist ideologies, often fueled by superficial and erroneous readings of religious texts, that negate the inherent worth and dignity of every person, regardless of religious belief. We call upon religious and community leaders to confront the spread of such ideologies that induce sectarianism and violence.

Violent extremism and terrorism are global challenges. They are perversions of authentic religious belief. The guilt of terrorist acts should not be assigned to members of an entire religion, nationality, culture, race, or ethnic group. Countering violent extremism requires firm determination and cooperation to address its root causes. The human family must collectively and genuinely confront poverty, unemployment, the worship of money, ignorance,

discrimination, armed occupation, military aggression, injustice, and the cultures of intolerance, supremacy, and impunity.

Peaceful coexistence is built on equity and justice. We call upon all to work toward developing a culture of encounter, tolerance, dialogue, and peace that respects the religious traditions of others. We commit ourselves to sustained, active inter-religious dialogue that transcends governments and national boundaries, serves the common good of the whole human family, and reflects our shared values.



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His Eminence Ayatollah Ali-Reza A'arafi  
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Senior Member, Supreme Council of the  
Society of Qom Seminary Scholars  
President, Al-Mustafa International  
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His Excellency Most Reverend Oscar Cantú  
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His Eminence Hujjatul Islam wal Muslimin  
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His Eminence Theodore Cardinal McCarrick  
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