

Lebanon's speech at the 8th Asian Parliamentary Assembly

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We gather here in this serene city as we have been generously invited by the Cambodian parliament to the 8th meeting of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly. The Cambodian parliament has been an active participant in the work of our Assembly. Therefore I would like to thank this parliament for organizing this international Conference, as I would like also to thank the Cambodian people and their government for their hospitality and warm reception.

I would also like to thank the Assembly's General Secretariat for its tireless efforts throughout the last years which were associated with Executive Council and competent committees meetings, all of which witnessed discussions promoting cooperation among Asian parliaments and activating the work of the Assembly and implementing its decisions.

After all these years of constant efforts, we see that the Assembly has stepped forward in terms of proving itself as an international parliamentary Assembly, that holds Asia's rise as its priority. It is well known that this continent is the center of the world on the account of population, concentration of natural resources, cultural diversity, and for being the heart of the ancient world and the cradle of divine religions and human civilizations. Accordingly, Asia is the continent eligible to play a leading role at the global level, and its countries, particularly those in this Assembly, are capable of contributing in the drafting of a new world order free of Unilateral dominance, a world order that would be balanced based on constructive cooperation and respect for all peoples' rights, freedom and well-being.

The activity of this Assembly should be an incentive for further work to activate its role throughout the contributions of the member states and the implementation

of our meetings' decisions and transforming the required of it into legislations in our countries in addition to exchanging expertise and experience.

Dear Colleagues,

Asia is facing major challenges that threaten its countries' independence and its people's freedom. On top of all these challenges facing us at this phase is the terrorist Takfiri risk striking many countries in Asia and extending to many others, targeting civilians as we saw with the attacks on the Russian civil plane in Egypt, in Lebanon, and in Paris.

This terrorism wouldn't have grown and developed without the support it received from several countries and groups that provided it with a fertile ground and a nurturing environment, and employed it for the benefit of their own policies and projects, particularly in the Middle East.

This terrorism has targeted both the people and construction as it committed horrific acts of murder and destroyed religious sanctities where its destructive activities has extended to reach the human civilization landmarks as we've witnessed in the Iraqi Mosul and the Syrian Palmyra and elsewhere. This terror has tried to portray itself in the name of Islam, but Islam has nothing to do with it. Islam is a religion of mercy, love, and coexistence and that has been proved over the centuries when non-Muslims lived in Muslim countries peacefully and safely and their temples and religious symbols stayed as a witness of that before the emergence of the Takfiri groups that targeted and killed Muslims and destroyed their sanctities more than that of non-Muslims.

There are dear countries in Asia and members of this Assembly who suffer from this terrorism, as is the case in Syria and Iraq. These two ancient countries with a history of religious coexistence and who has been subjected for years now to a fierce attack by the Takfiri groups, are holding on despite attempts by many countries to support these groups with the aim of imposing their own will.

As for our own country Lebanon, the icon of coexistence between religions who's been able to free its land from the Israeli occupation thanks to its popular resistance, it has suffered from a terrorist wave through bombings carried out by

these groups, most recently in the southern suburbs of Beirut. Alas, Lebanon has managed, thanks to its strength factors, including the integrating roles between its resistance and army, to prevent these groups from creating an independent emirate on its territory, and degrading their sabotaging networks, including these responsible for the most recent bombings. Lebanon is still fighting this dangerous phenomenon in a time it is sheltering more than one million and three hundred thousand displaced Syrians on its territory, which is equivalent to a quarter of its population.

We call upon the parliaments of this Assembly to issue the necessary legislations to fight this phenomenon and criminalize its backers, whether they are States, groups, or individuals.

Parallel to this Takfiri terrorism, there is an Asian country who is still being subjected to the state terrorism of the Israeli occupation of Palestine that is preventing its people from establishing their own independent state. The killings and attempts to change the cultural monuments and the violation of the holy sites are daily practices by the Israeli occupation against the Palestinian people, who are struggling against this organized terrorism with popular uprisings, one after another.

Our conference is invited to back the Palestinian people and support their cause and to criminalize this terrorism through strict regulations in the countries within the roof of this Assembly.

I hope this conference and through the Cambodian presidency for the next two years will succeed in achieving what we all aspire to enhancing the role of our Assembly and developing its work.