

Ladies and Gentlemen:

From my heart, I salute your sincere efforts to prevent and respond to the terrible crimes against minorities around the world.

Certainly it was not the intent of God – may his name be blessed - in creating man and providing for his comfort and freedom, for violence to become one of the means used by humans to further their own interests.

But the worst kinds of violence and terrorism are carried out by humans on behalf and in the name of God, as if God needs someone to execute his provisions!

They wanted to give their love of violence and evil some kind of legitimacy, so they linked their violence to some religious concepts that are completely far from the nature of God and the purpose for which God created man on earth.

Therefore, the problem lies in these people's ignorance and their false understanding of God, and their lack of awareness of his teachings which cannot encourage violence and murder.

This approach can also be seen in the behavior of some governments towards intellectuals and enlightened writers, when they exclude them in favor of advocates of ignorance and promoters of sedition. We have many of these in our communities.

Thus institutions in these countries, from national newspapers, television channels and platforms of learning, come under the monopoly of these people, as the doors shut in the face of advocates of freedom and acceptance of others.

And now we ask: Who is responsible for the outbreak of ignorance in our communities, and who is responsible for this terrorism?

Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a mistake to think that this conflict in Syria and Iraq is far enough from here, or that the West is safe from a similar conflict if we do not unite, join hands and solve our issues with each other in order to stop this war.

ISIS, which is spreading its corruption in those countries, killing innocents and cutting off the heads of people who refuse to follow its ideology, is not just an organization that includes a few thousand members in one state or another.

It is an idea that controls the minds of many people who walk among us, work with us and share food with us, who maybe, if given the opportunity, would eat us alive.

In my country, Egypt, Christians have suffered for more than a half a century, and although they are the biggest minority in number in the Middle East, between 15 to 18 million people, they suffer from discriminatory practices, inferior treatment and systematic attacks against them and their sanctuaries while the state does nothing to protect them.

With a change in the map of international understandings and agreements and with the support of the major powers, it was made possible for the extremist group the Muslim Brotherhood to acquire the reins of power in Egypt, and the Middle East was made wide-open to the fundamentalist tide. When the Egyptians confirmed their intention to correct this mistaken situation, these states planted “democracy funds” to flout the will of millions of Egyptians who had gone out into the streets and squares to depose the Brotherhood.

In August 2013, scores of churches and religious institutions in Egypt were exposed to ferocious attack at the hands of extremists, amidst conspicuous international silence. But Egyptians proved their worthiness to live in dignity by not losing heart and proceeding along the path to determine the features of their country’s political future, in spite of the continuing challenges.

In Upper Egypt, the phenomenon of kidnapping has been growing, and the victims have not found a way to avoid being killed except by paying ransom. This is in addition to the phenomenon of the forced disappearance of minor girls with the goal of converting them to Islam, which has also been clearly growing with the rise of Islamic movements. The flight of Copts from their villages and the seizure of their lands and homes also continues. This problem has even reached the heart of the capital city, where a government-sponsored customary “reconciliation session” ordered the deportation of Christian families from the neighborhood of Al-Matriya, and forced them to pay sums of money, a piece of land, and numbers of heads of camels and cattle. The justification was a quarrel between Copts and Muslims in which a Muslim passerby was killed by gunfire from an unknown source.

Despite all that, the Christians are fortunate compared to other minorities in Egypt. Those who belong to other faiths, such as the Baha’i or Shi’a Muslims, are not recognized as having any rights from the perspective of the state. Campaigns of incitement contributed to mobs burning the homes of the Baha’i in the village of Al-Sharonia, and the killing of a Shi’a imam in Zawiyat Abu al-Nimros.

This is the same predicament the Christians are living through in Syria, where they are among the oldest and best-known communities in the country. They have become fuel for a grinding war between the regime and fundamentalist groups, some of whom are supported by the international community.

The culture of violence, fanaticism, and extremism that underlies ISIS' thought is present, pervasive and deeply-rooted in the hearts of many who hold Egyptian citizenship. It may even dwarf the ugliness of ISIS found in Iraq and Syria.

The Institute For Economics and Peace (IEP) index showed that the number of people who died because of global terrorism in all parts of the world has risen by 61% during 2013 from the previous year, to reach a record level of nearly 18,000 people, and this number rose significantly in 2014.

Which obligates the international community, relevant organizations and particularly the United Nations, to do the following:

1. Search for ways to provide protection for minorities within their own countries, confront the problem of displacement, abandoning the idea of alternative homelands encouraged by countries which declare their readiness to welcome numbers of immigrants, and provide means of protection for minority groups' religious and cultural heritage.
2. Work on cutting funding to organizations and associations that contribute to the spread of extremism, and confront their media platforms where they promote extremist ideas.
3. Provide greater support for developing and poor countries to improve educational systems and promote the exchange of scientific expertise through missions involving students and professors from these countries.
4. Find ways to encourage countries to fulfill their international obligations in laws for protection of minorities and prevent the violation of the right of minorities to live in dignity in the regions they inhabit.
5. Encourage religious institutions and leaders to play a role in spreading the culture of tolerance between religions and strengthening the bonds of love and harmony between different religions and the rejection of division, in addition to consolidating the values of equality among citizens without any discrimination based on gender, race or belief.

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His activity has received international and local attention, particularly on the issues of kidnapping and disappearances of minors, as well as his tireless efforts to urge the Egyptian Government to sign the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances.

Louis participated in the youth movement that demanded change during the January 25th Revolution, and was a member of the National Assembly of Change and the 6th of April youth movement.