Muslim World League Convenes Sunni and Shiite leaders from Iraq in Makkah to Bridge the Divide

MAKKAH, Saudi Arabia – The Muslim World League convened the “Forum of Iraqi References” today with eighty prominent Iraqi Sunni and Shiite religious leaders and scholars to promote unity and reconciliation around the threads that connect all Muslims, regardless of their sect, nationality, or ethnicity.

Gathered in the Holy City of Makkah, home of the Qibla, the MWL led a full-day conference, where participants developed a framework on the roles of scholars in combatting sectarianism and religious extremism, promoting intra-faith coexistence, and providing support to Iraqi government efforts to achieve a lasting peace.

MWL Secretary General His Excellency Sheikh Dr. Mohammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa spearheaded the effort, which included:

- His Eminence Hassan Ibrahim AbulQasem Al Khoei, Professor in the House of Knowledge
- His Eminence Sheikh Dr. Ahmed Hassan Al-Taha, Senior Scholar of the Iraqi Fiqh Academy and Imam and Preacher of the Hanafi School
- Zaid Muhammed Abboud Bahr Al Uloom, Professor at the Hawzah in Najaf
- Saleh Mahdi Baqer Al Hakim, Office Director of Marja Muhammed Saeed
- His Excellency Sayyid Mohammad Ali Mohammad Ali Bahr Al-Uloom, Supervisor of the Teachers Institute for Graduate Studies, spokesperson for the Shiite References
- His Excellency Dr. Saad Hamid Kambash, Head of the Sunni Endowment Office
- His Eminence Sayyid Mohammad Ali Mohammad Ali Bahr Al-Uloom, Supervisor of the Teachers Institute for Graduate Studies, spokesperson for the Shiite References
- His Excellency Dr. Haider Hassan Jalil Al-Shammari, Head of the Shiite Endowment Office
- His Excellency Dr. Pashtun Sadiq Abdullah, Minister of Endowments and Religious Affairs in Iraq’s Kurdistan Region.

Beyond these senior leaders, the depth of support from both sides demonstrated the unwavering commitment to fostering real change in local communities throughout Iraq.

“Today’s event represented the true principles of Islam,” said Dr. Al-Issa. “Islam teaches us to always strive for peace and reconciliation. It instructs us to embrace diversity and respect each other’s differences. It tells us to live in coexistence and harmony with all. And it directs us to build bridges of cooperation and understanding. The Muslim leaders and scholars gathered in the Holy City of Makkah demonstrated their commitment to promoting these values.”
The leaders agreed to establish a new coordination committee which will serve as a direct platform for resolving disagreements within Iraq where Islamic leaders can foster unity and address any disputes before they escalate.

Consensus also emerged to plan and create a new high-level permanent commission for cooperation on Iraqi Islamic affairs that will focus on outreach domestically and outside Iraq throughout the Ummah and between other faiths. The commission will be led by a rotating Presidency, with a Secretary General providing oversight to follow through on the ideas set by the esteemed scholars.

The regular communication between these clerics will serve to counteract those that would seek to twist the peaceful message of the Qu’ran to inspire hatred and political violence, and ensure the necessary infrastructure exists for consistent messaging of the true tenets of Islam.

The senior religious leaders will continue to focus on teaching the Prophet’s true message and aim to ease sectarian tensions in Iraq across their diverse followings.

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