

Lecture by His Eminence, Dr. Shawky Allam, Mufti of the Arab
Republic of Egypt
University of Belgrade, June 8, 2023

H.E. Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister responsible for foreign policy and security and Minister of Foreign Affairs,

H.E. Mr. Đorđe Milićević, Acting Minister of Education,

Dr. Zoran Mirkovic, Dean of the Faculty of Law, University of Belgrade,

Dr. Vladan Dokic, Rector of the University of Belgrade

Dr. Ratko Ristic, Vice Rector of the University of Belgrade

Dr. Vladimir Roganovic, director of the administration for cooperation with churches and religious communities, Ministry of Justice

Dr. Branko Rakic, Head of the department for international law and international relations, Faculty of Law

Dear gentlemen, professors

My sons and daughters, students of Belgrade University

Ladies and gentlemen

May the peace, blessings, and mercy of God be upon you. Allow me at the beginning, on behalf of the Egyptian government and people, to express my heartfelt condolences to the government of the friendly Serbian people, for the heavy loss of Serbian children and citizens in the two mass killings on May 3 and 4 of the previous

month. I pray to God to have mercy on them and grant their families and the Serbian people patience and solace. May I invite all of you to observe a minute of silence for their precious souls.

It is my pleasure to express my great gratitude for being hosted today at the Faculty of Law of the prestigious University of Belgrade, which is the largest and oldest university in Serbia and one of the most prestigious universities in the Balkans. It is also a matter of pride and happiness to visit this great country that has close historical ties with Egypt, witnessed by their historical role in the emergence of the Non-Aligned Movement, which led more than half of the countries of the world for almost thirty years.

I also express my pleasure considering that I visited Serbia after the successful historic visit of H. E. Mr. President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, to Belgrade in July 2022, and his meeting with H. E. Mr. President Aleksandar Vucic, President of the Republic of Serbia, which contributed to advancing bilateral cooperation between the two friendly countries in all fields.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The tangible and distinguished efforts made by Serbia and Serbian Government in eliminating religious intolerance and spreading tolerance and harmony among its citizens without discrimination on the basis of religion deserve praise and appreciation from every fair person, as I sensed from the first moment of my arrival in Belgrade the extent of the complete integration of Serbian Muslims and Christians into the national fabric for Serbia, and the extensive efforts exerted to ensure non-discrimination on religious grounds in all matters of daily life of the Serbian citizen.

Dear students,

The moral and religious responsibility resting on the shoulders of religious leaders in the world towards the issue of supporting the values of common coexistence between religions is great and heavy, as religious leaders of all religions are respected and appreciated by all people without exception, due to their lofty goals and messages, as well as their renunciation of political and worldly ambitions, and they are in a position to spread sublime values and morals among people, therefore it was necessary for them to lead the path of reforming religious discourse, and to move it away from the circle of hostilities and clashes adopted by some extremist minds who tend to spread the fanatic abnormal values of disdaining all religions.

In order to achieve this noble goal, it is necessary to cooperate among world religious leaders in order to unify the vision and determine the appropriate means, and to conduct organized programs in order to gather the hearts of the vast masses to reject intolerance and racism and to distance themselves from discrimination on the basis of religion, and before and after, to establish a culture of acceptance of the other and respecting his opinion and belief, while cooperating on the scientific and academic levels in order to carry out projects and solid research, to crystallize these values in an honest and serious scientific image, supported by the scientific method, and the values of coexistence called for by all religions.

Dear brothers and sister,

The constancy of moral values guarantees the preservation of security and safety in society, regardless of the different beliefs and religions, and any tampering with the moral system that people are familiar with will lead to disastrous consequences. Hence, we really need to activate these values and turn them into a tangible reality in our present era, to counter the dangers that spur the flames of

hatred, fanaticism, discord, sectarianism, extremism and terrorism, and attack human dignity.

We are in dire need of great efforts to entrench values and morals in societies through religious, media, educational, and artistic institutions, by conducting initiatives that activate these sublime values in order to end hatred and revive harmony and peace.

We need our contemporary education to educate students, young and old, to be integrated in their agreements and disagreements, just as we need human rights advocates to call for and support people regardless of gender, color, and religion, and we need to respect privacy and diversity. Our institutions should spread peace, love and dialogue in words and deeds.

In this context, Islamic religious scholars have taken it upon themselves to spread the true picture of Islam, which we hope will give the world a better understanding of its lofty moral principles and values.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Egyptian Dar Al-Iftaa has exerted efforts steadily to gather unity, consolidate brotherhood, and reject hatred in the field of fatwas. So, we contributed to establishing the General Secretariat and fatwa bodies worldwide to negotiate and cooperate on righteousness and piety, and to reunite the muftis on love and peace and to reject hatred locally and globally.

The Egyptian Dar Al Iftaa and the General Secretariat of the Egyptian Institution of Fatwa and organizations in the world have been keen to translate these values in their activities, fatwas, statements, initiatives and various international conferences.

The Egyptian Institution of Fatwa established its observatories and launched its initiatives to serve this noble goal. For example, we established an observatory of fatwas to counter hatred which extremists are trying to spread and falsely attribute them to Islam.

This observatory was launched under the name “The Observatory of Takfiri and anomalous Fatwas”, in parallel with another observatory that monitors hate practices, which is the Observatory of Islamophobia, which is concerned with what is called hatred against Islam and Muslims in the world. We also launched the Global Fatwa Index to measure the patterns of moderation and hatred in the field of Iftaa, and these efforts culminated in the establishment of the Salam Center for Extremism Studies, which seeks to be an umbrella for all research centers concerned with combating extremism, prevention and treatment.

There is no doubt that these initiatives, in addition to the good intentions from here and there, provide supportive educational curricula and specific media platforms. We should adopt the work of the outcome of these initiatives in order to bear the desired results.

Ladies and gentlemen,

At the end of my speech, it pleases me to thank you all for this kind invitation, and I can only hope and pray to God to help us spread the culture of coexistence, security and peace among all human beings, and to strengthen our resolve to uproot the roots of intolerance, extremism and violence from the minds of our children are from every religion and sect. Humanity needs to live in security, peace and cooperation so that goodness may spread to everyone.

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.