



**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY MEXICO, AT THE SECURITY COUNCIL ARRIA  
FORMULA MEETING ON RELIGION, BELIEF AND CONFLICT: ADVANCING THE  
PROTECTION OF MEMBERS OF RELIGIOUS AND BELIEF GROUPS IN  
CONFLICT AND THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS ACTORS IN CONFLICT  
RESOLUTION**

**New York, March 19, 2021**

Thank you, Excellency:

Mexico thanks the United Kingdom and the co-sponsors for convening this meeting, and the briefers presentations. We are confident that the views exchanged today will allow for advancing efforts in the prevention of violent extremism conducive to terrorism and ensuring sustained peace.

The deplorable actions carried out by Daesh in Syria and Iraq underline the urgent need to generate and promote effective and comprehensive strategies aimed at countering their activities, their means of financing, recruitment strategies and at bringing those responsible for such heinous crimes to justice. But more importantly, they force us to look at the root causes that led to such atrocities so that we do not replicate negative patterns of conduct that fuel spirals of violence.

Violence that is driven on religious or ethnic grounds is not limited to a single region, country or religion or belief. The same applies to the effects of terrorism, and armed conflict. In today's interconnected world – a reality that has been emphasized due to the current COVID-19 pandemic – ideas and information flow freely, including violent extremist ideologies that can be conducive to terrorism and that have been exploited by terrorist organizations in the context of armed conflict to target – amongst others – religious and ethnic minorities.

Mexico is a firm believer in the importance of prevention by addressing the underlying issues that drive individuals towards violence, including by promoting community resilience to extremist messages that target social, political and economic grievances. Likewise, we believe that there are many lessons to be learned from conflict prevention and consolidation, in particular those efforts to promote inclusion, interfaith dialogue, cooperation for development and, crucially, the respect for human rights for all as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

All over fragile contexts around the world, religious and community leaders need to be fully engaged to address drivers of violence and conflict, as well as to promote

social inclusion. It is relevant to recognize their work on the ground and their contribution in decision-making processes. Likewise, we must also recognize and take advantage of the contributions of secular organizations and community leaders that also work to promote intercultural dialogue aimed at preventing and countering violent extremism that can be conducive to terrorism and preventing armed conflict.

In these efforts we must also be clear on the importance of respecting the freedom of religion or belief by everyone, including agnostic communities, atheists and former believers, otherwise known as freedom from religion. We are extremely concerned about the effects that blasphemy and apostasy laws and decrees may have over freedom of speech, including openly debating and discussing aspects of faith or belief and we reject any false dichotomy that leads to restrictions on human rights and freedoms as a justification for order and harmony. Likewise, gender equality should not become an afterthought but a principle in any process of conflict resolution, including by dispelling gender roles and stereotypes. Freedom of religion or belief should not come at the cost of other fundamental human rights, including women rights.

Mexico wishes to recognize the valuable work carried out by the United Nations Alliance for Civilizations and its initiatives around the world, aimed at deconstructing stereotypes and hate speech, including through the implementation of the “Global Pledge for Action by Religious Actors and Faith-Based Organizations to Address the COVID-19 Pandemic”, an initiative co-led by UNAOC, the UN Office on Genocide Prevention and Responsibility to Protect and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

As we uphold the principles of freedom of belief, we welcome the international community’s consensus as expressed through the Human Rights Council and General Assembly resolutions adopted on a yearly basis which represent the best expression of our shared concerns.

Thank you.