

Your Excellency Khaled Shawani

Minister of Justice of the Republic of Iraq

Chairman of the 39th session of the Council of Arab Ministers of Justice,

Your Excellencies, Highnesses, and distinguished Ministers of Justice,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Peace, mercy, and blessings of God be upon you,

I extend my warm greetings to all of you as we convene for the 39th session of the Council of Arab Ministers of Justice. It is an honour for me to address you from this revered land of Mesopotamia, a cradle of civilisation and history. I wish to express my heartfelt appreciation to all those responsible for orchestrating this session, under the able leadership of His Excellency, Prime Minister Muhammad Al-Sudani, for the exceptional hospitality, meticulous organisation, and thorough preparation that have been put into this event. I also extend my sincere greetings to the esteemed assembly of justice dignitaries present here.

I take this moment to extend my congratulations to His Excellency, Dr. Khaled Shawani, the Minister of Justice of the Republic of Iraq, as he assumes the presidency of the current session of this prominent Council. I wish him every success and good fortune in this role. I also wish to express my gratitude to His Excellency, Mr. Abdel Latif Wehbe, the Minister of Justice of the Kingdom of Morocco, for his commendable efforts in managing the previous session and ensuring the implementation of its decisions, despite the challenges we all faced. I must not forget to acknowledge the diligent efforts of the Chairman and members of the Executive Office for their outstanding contributions in preparing for this session.

Your Excellencies, Highnesses,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We gather today under a backdrop of challenging circumstances, as our people in Gaza endure a barbaric assault whose motives seem to be nothing more than collective punishment and, even more gravely, extermination. The 2.2 million people living in Gaza, who have endured a 17-year-long siege, nearly half of them are innocent children, are subject to an insane policy of retribution before the eyes of the world.

The tragedy in Gaza, with its daily heart-wrenching images, is not only a stain on Israel's conscience but a damning indictment of the international community and the global moral compass, which remains alarmingly silent when silence itself becomes a crime. It stands idly by while the imperative to protect innocent civilians goes unheeded.

From the outset, the occupying military forces declared an inhumane blockade on Gaza, withholding food, fuel, and water, thereby dehumanising the Palestinian people and setting the stage for a campaign of ethnic cleansing. We are witnessing the steps in this process unfolding day by day.

The forced displacement of the population is a war crime. Failure to distinguish between combatants and civilians is a war crime. Collective punishment is a war crime. These are the well-established tenets of international humanitarian law. Unfortunately, it is clear that the occupiers know no laws in war and are receiving the green light from the world to commit these massacres.

We call for an immediate cessation of military operations and the immediate establishment of secure corridors to provide humanitarian relief to the suffering population, deliver essential supplies, and evacuate the wounded, as the health sector teeters on the brink of collapse in the Strip being shelled every minute.

Our hearts go out to the righteous martyrs. I invite you all to observe a minute of silence in honour of every child, woman, and man who has fallen victim to this brutal attack.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have carefully reviewed the agenda of your esteemed Council, which addresses issues of paramount importance for all of us. This agenda reflects the Council's dedication and ceaseless efforts in areas such as counterterrorism, the harmonisation of Arab legislation, the formulation of the Arab Convention against Corruption, the Arab Convention on the Status of Refugees in Arab Countries, and the strengthening of cooperation between the secretariats of the Arab Ministers of Justice and Interior.

As we wish your Council every success in its endeavours, I would like to suggest that the outcomes of this session include a resounding statement of solidarity with our Palestinian brethren. It is crucial that the world hears our unified voice from every platform and forum.

Peace, mercy, and blessings of God be upon you.