

**Opening address of His Excellency Ambassador
Ahmed Rashid Khattabi,
Assistant Secretary-General,
Head of the Media and Communication Sector**

**At the Forum on the Role of Media in Fostering
a Culture of Tolerance and Peaceful
Coexistence**

General Secretariat Headquarters

8 May 2025

In the Name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful,

Dear brother Dr. Amr El-Leithy,

Chairman of the Union of Radio and Television of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation States,

Distinguished Guests,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the headquarters of the League of Arab States, which marks the 80th anniversary of its founding this year, reaffirming its steadfast commitment to advancing this notable regional organisation with renewed vigour and ambition.

At the outset, allow me to underscore that this forum is convened within the framework of implementing the cooperation protocol signed between the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States (Media and Communication Sector) and the Union of Radio and Television of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation in Cairo in 2024.

The theme, "The Role of Media in Fostering a Culture of Tolerance and Peaceful Coexistence," embodies the shared resolve of both regional bodies to confront hate speech and reject violence and extremism. It is rooted in our mutual principles and commitment to upholding the objectives of the United Nations, as articulated in international human rights declarations, protocols, and General Assembly resolutions that promote interfaith dialogue and enshrine the World Day for Combating Hatred. Notably, in 2023, the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted a historic resolution—upon the initiative of the Kingdom of Morocco—on respect for religious symbols and championing dialogue and tolerance between religions and cultures.

A compelling illustration of the collaborative endeavours between the two organisations is the ongoing pursuit to halt the aggression, devastation, and humanitarian crisis in Gaza—a war marked by disproportionate force and driven by vindictive acts by extremist Israeli factions that fuel hatred and

flout the tenets of human decency and international humanitarian law. I appeal for a rekindling of human conscience to immediately end the bloodshed and famine ravaging the Gaza Strip.

Distinguished Guests,

The media stands as a cornerstone of the universally recognised human rights framework, wielding profound influence in shaping societal awareness and behaviour. It plays an indispensable role in nurturing a culture of peace and tolerance and in promoting respect for cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity—provided this respect remains in harmony with our enlightened spiritual values and international norms. Such diversity must be regarded as a wellspring of enrichment, not a catalyst for confrontation, conflict, or exclusion, nor a pretext for perpetuating stereotypes that fuel division, discord, and hostility against minorities and marginalised groups.

The media's capacity to counter hate speech is intrinsically linked to the meteoric rise of social media platforms, which, while heralding unprecedented freedom of expression and democratisation of communication, have simultaneously become fertile ground for the proliferation of hate speech. This duality necessitates robust collaboration among all stakeholders—governmental bodies, legislative institutions, civil society, educational entities, media establishments, and religious and intellectual leaders—within a comprehensive framework where media assumes a pivotal role.

In this context, the League of Arab States, through Article 8 of its Media Code of Honour, has firmly underscored the imperative of "deepening the spirit of tolerance, fraternity, and pluralism, and rejecting all forms of bias, discrimination, and fanaticism—whether national, ethnic, sectarian, or religious—while refraining from broadcasting, transmitting, or publishing any material that incites hatred, extremism, violence, or terrorism, or that undermines the rights, reputations, beliefs, or religious symbols of others."

In conclusion, I reiterate my gratitude for your valued participation in this forum, which we trust will enrich the dialogue on this critical matter. We

eagerly anticipate thoughtful and constructive discussions among diplomats, academics, experts, and media professionals, culminating in actionable recommendations that will strengthen and refine a dynamic Arab vision for the media's role in combating hatred.

May the peace and mercy of God be upon you.