

Muslim World League, American Jewish Committee Memorandum of Understanding Paves Way for Most Senior Islamic Delegation Ever to Visit Auschwitz

April 30, 2019 -- NEW YORK -- His Excellency, Dr. Mohammad Abdulkarim Al-Issa, Secretary General of the Muslim World League, will become the most senior Islamic leader to visit the Nazi death camp at Auschwitz. The trip is a key element of a historic memorandum of understanding signed by Dr. Al-Issa and American Jewish Committee (AJC) CEO David Harris today at AJC headquarters.

The MOU codifies the commitment of the two global institutions to further Muslim-Jewish understanding and cooperate against racism and extremism in all its forms. As part of the understanding, Dr. Al-Issa has accepted an invitation from Mr. Harris to join him at the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz in January 2020.

"I believe that by paying my respects to the victims of Auschwitz, I will encourage Muslims and non-Muslims to embrace mutual respect, understanding and diversity," said Dr. Al-Issa, the world's foremost voice on moderate Islam. "I am grateful to David Harris for his thoughtful and timely invitation, and am honored to accept."

"The launch of cooperative projects by AJC and MWL, and Dr. Al-Issa's visit to Auschwitz, is a direct rebuttal to the extremists who threaten us all," Harris said. "By educating people on the horrors of history, we can plant the seeds for a future where Jews, Muslims and all other groups can live free of fear."

As part of the MOU, Dr. Al-Issa also has accepted an invitation from Mr. Harris to address the AJC Global Forum in Berlin, in June 2020. Mr. Harris, in turn, has accepted an invitation from Dr. Al-Issa to lead an American Jewish Committee delegation to Saudi Arabia.

Dr. Al-Issa said: "The heinous attacks in Pittsburgh, in New Zealand, in Sri Lanka and just this weekend near San Diego compel us all to unite and stand up against those who want to divide us."

Harris said: "I thank Dr. Al-Issa both for his valued partnership and invitation. We shall look forward to returning to Saudi Arabia, which AJC first visited nearly 25 years ago, to learn more about current efforts to launch interfaith initiatives."

The MWL, an organization based in the holy city of Makkah, educates Muslims on true Islam, a religion of peace and moderation. It also conducts a range of activities worldwide to promote interfaith harmony.

In 2017, Dr. Al-Issa visited the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and declared Holocaust denial a crime against Islam. More than 1.1 million people, mostly Jews, were killed at Auschwitz-Birkenau. The site stands as a memorial to all those who perished in the Nazi genocide.

On Monday, Dr. Al-Issa signed a separate agreement with Rabbi Arthur Schneier of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation at Park East Synagogue in New York, focused on the protection of religious sites worldwide. Also Monday, Dr. Al-Issa met His Eminence, Timothy

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Cardinal Dolan, the Archbishop of New York, at his private residence adjacent to St. Patrick's Cathedral to discuss closer cooperation between MWL and the Roman Catholic Church.

AJC, based in New York, with offices across the United States and posts around the world, is the premier global Jewish advocacy organization. Founded in 1906, AJC combats anti-Semitism and other forms of hatred and extremism. AJC has long been a pioneer in interfaith relations. The MOU with the Muslim World League is the latest AJC Initiative advancing Muslim-Jewish understanding and cooperation.

The agreement between MWL and AJC is an initiative of the Centre for Responsible Leadership and its Founder and President, Bawa Jain.

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