



**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR
JULIUS MAADA BIO, PRESIDENT OF
THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE, AT
THE 15TH ORGANISATION OF
ISLAMIC CONFERENCE (OIC),
BANJUL, REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA
- 4TH - 5TH MAY 2024**

Your Excellency, President Adama Barrow, Chair of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC)

Your Highnesses

Emirs

Heads of State and Government

Your Excellency Mohamed Salem Ould Merzoug, Chair of the Council of Foreign Ministers

Your Excellency, Hissein Brahim Taha, Secretary-General of the OIC

Members of the Fourth Estate

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

ASSALAMU ALAIKUM WA RAHMATU LAH WA BARAKATUH!

1. I bring you warm greetings from the Government and People of the Republic of Sierra Leone.
2. Let me express my deepest appreciation to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for its exemplary stewardship during the 14th Islamic Summit Conference in Makkah 2019.
3. I also commend the Government and People of the Republic of The Gambia for their exceptional efforts in organising this 15th Summit in concert with the OIC General Secretariat.
4. I would also like to congratulate, in particular, His Excellency Adama Barrow, President of the Republic of The Gambia, for his significant role in assuming the chairmanship of this noble Organisation.
5. I also thank my brother, President Barrow, for the warm welcome accorded to me and my delegation to the renowned "Smiling Coast of Africa."

EXCELLENCIES,

6. Sierra Leone is proud to be part of this dynamic and diverse community, which is bound together by shared values and aspirations.

7. Given the current situation in the international community, the theme "Enhancing Unity and Solidarity Through Dialogue for Sustainable Development" could not have come at a more opportune time.

8. This gathering holds profound significance, bringing together nations tied by shared values, aspirations, and a commitment to foster peace, progress, and prosperity in our respective regions and beyond.

9. In these challenging times marked by global uncertainties and complex geopolitical dynamics, the solidarity and cooperation among OIC Member States stand as a beacon of hope and resilience.

10. Even as we speak, the tectonic plates of the global order are fast shifting, tittering on the brink due to geopolitical tensions spanning from the Middle East through the Caucasus, the South China Sea, and the Sahel region in Africa.

11. We are arguably living in a fractious, fragmented society where the entrenched positions of the various warring factions undermine any realistic prospect for a sustained peaceful resolution of these conflicts. No region in the world is insulated from this canvas of chaos.

EXCELLENCIES,

12. We are witnessing the horrendous humanitarian situation in the besieged Gaza Strip with incalculable loss of civilian lives.

13. Sadly, there is no haven for the innocent and defenseless as the war continues to decimate schools, hospitals, places of worship and residential buildings.

14. I use this opportunity to join other distinguished delegates in extending profound sympathy to all the family members who have lost their loved ones to this devastating and inhumane war. May Allah grant them *Aljannah Firdaus*.

15. The situation is further compounded as the Ummah continues to grapple with the problems of Islamophobia, natural disasters and economic crises, including the impact of climate change and COVID-19.

16. This is why there is this loud cry for an urgent, practicable solution to this horrific situation to ensure the survival and well-being of the global community.

EXCELLENCIES,

17. Peace and Development are not mutually exclusive entities. Indeed, each is a prerequisite for the other, as in a symbiotic relationship.

18. Hence, diplomacy through effective dialogue, anchored in international law, must continue to be the effective tool at our disposal for realising sustainable development for all.

19. Therefore, Politics and Economics must not be compartmentalised and treated in silos. Both should be blended into an amalgam, the very glue with which to fill the cracks and crevices in the international system to enhance the much desired but still elusive unity and solidarity.

EXCELLENCIES,

20. If members of the International Community fail to abide by international law, global conflicts will continue to proliferate.

21. Parties involved in armed conflict are obligated to abide by the core principles and provisions of international human rights and humanitarian law, guaranteeing the complete protection of non-combatants and innocent citizens.

22. Regrettably, the decisions of the United Nations (UN) Security Council, the General Assembly, the International Court of Justice and the Human Rights Commission have generally been disregarded.

23. But for all its imperfections, it is the UN Security Council that has the mandate to maintain international peace and security, primarily through effective negotiation, mediation, and other related peaceful means.

24. Although it now appears to be in gridlock on these crucial issues, and international law itself seems to be on serious trial, the UN remains the indispensable pillar of the global system on which we can rely to address our disputes.

25. This Ummah must continue to deploy all its diplomatic and other resources to act in concert and ensure a cessation and de-escalation of this conflict with a view to reverting to the status quo ante.

EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

26. The central issue in the Middle East remains the materialisation of a two-state solution based on the [1963]

borders, in which both Israel and Palestine can live side by side in peace and security as two independent sovereign states.

27. To this end, Sierra Leone continues to reaffirm its commitment to the international legal order and multilateralism as embodied by the Charter of the United Nations and related international instruments.

28. We reaffirm our support for the Palestinian Cause and the situation in Al-Quds Al-Sharif based on international law, United Nations resolutions, the Arab Peace Initiative, and the approved international references.

29. There is obviously a compelling need to work together to enhance our joint action and coordinate positions on these issues of mutual concern.

30. As a member of the Security Council in the Non-Permanent Category, thanks to the unstinted support of this Ummah, as well as my role as the current Chair of the Council of Ten Heads of States (C-10) on the Reform of the UN Security Council, Sierra Leone is well positioned to continue to play the crucial leadership role in promoting world peace and stability in a pragmatic and principled fashion in accordance with international law to achieve global peace and sustainable development.

31. I thank you all for your kind attention!

32. Assalamu Alaykum wa Rahmatullah wa Barakatuh.