



Speech of His Excellency  
**Dr. Ahmad Mohammad Al Salem**  
Secretary General of the Arab Interior  
Ministers Council  
at the 10th  
United Nations Congress on  
Crime Prevention and the Treatment  
of Offenders

Mr. Chairman .....  
Ladies and Gentlemen .....

It is indeed a great pleasure for me at the start of my speech to convey to you the greetings of their Excellencies the Arab Ministers of Interior, coupled with their wishes for your congress of best success, expressing simultaneously their will to support any international effort that can foster the security, safety, and welfare of Man, whoever or wherever he might be on our planet. Our presence today amongst you, and our participation in the deliberations of your congress is but a manifestation of our readiness to stand by your side as an Arab Regional Organization entrusted with developing cooperation and coordination among the Arab states in the field of internal security and combating crime.

Mr. Chairman .....  
Ladies and Gentlemen .....

The Arab Interior Ministers Council (AIMC) which encompasses in its membership all the twenty two Arab states is considered rightly a successful model for joint Arab action. Our Council has proved itself effective in meeting the challenges, and in its capacity to effectively work, even in the most difficult circumstances. Our goal and objective, therefore, is to ensure the safety and security of the individual in our Arab world. I mean by the individual, any person regardless of his/her race, nationality, faith or ethnic background. Everyone needs security, whether, a citizen or a resident. Everybody are equal when the security service is offered. And cooperation among all in this field is an essential requirement, if we are to live a decent, safe, and secure life, whether for ourselves or for our societies.

Mr. Chairman .....  
Ladies and Gentlemen .....

The Secretariat General of the (AIMC) has participated, with utmost sincerity and effectiveness, in the meetings of the Specialized Committee for putting down an international convention to combat the organized transnational crime. Our participation springs from our deepest belief that regional cooperation alone, regardless of its kind or size, is not sufficient to face this type of criminality, which is marked with accurate planning, organization, and professionalism, as it moves across borders and frontiers.

It is almost impossible, however, for any state or regional entity alone to combat crime and counter it effectively. Moreover, the existence of regional cooperation is still a necessity for the establishment of an efficient and effective international cooperation. Therefore, the efforts exerted by the (AIMC) in confronting organized crime complement the international efforts in this domain, and help in their success.

In the field of combating terrorism, for instance, we have an Arab Convention to combat terrorism which entered into force in the beginning of last year 1999. And we call upon all to expand the scope of this convention, in order to enhance the security and judicial cooperation among the different countries of the world, so as to corner terrorists and limit their activities. We also have a Code of Conduct Document for the member states to combat terrorism. We call upon the international community to put down an international document that encompasses all the member states in the United Nations. We also reiterate our call to hold an international conference under the United Nations umbrella, which allows the participation of all countries in combating terrorism, and aims at arriving to a unified understanding of terrorism. There must be a distinction between terrorism which must be condemned, and the legitimate armed struggle of peoples endeavoring to liberate their land and restore their rights, in accordance with international charters and conventions. Isn't it wrong and unjust to describe the actions taken by the Lebanese Resistance to liberate South Lebanon from the occupation as terrorist acts ... ? Isn't it the duty of every citizen wherever he might be to struggle for the freedom, dignity and independence ..? Isn't it a distortion, annoying and prejudice to accuse Islam of terrorism, as if our Islamic Religion - which calls for peace, security, and solidarity was the source of all the terrorist acts in this country or that ? Islam, as one of the divine religions, forbids bloodshed of the innocent, and the murder of any soul without a legitimate cause. Islam is innocent of all the terrorist acts executed in its name and under its umbrella. We all know that terrorism has no race or religion, and that those who carry out terrorist acts all over the world belong to different religions and nationalities.

Mr. Channan .....  
Ladies and Gentlemen .....

The Drugs Crime is also one of the transnational organized crimes which have attracted significant amount of interest and attention of our esteemed Council. We have achieved consecutive successes in encountering this epidemic and limit its spread, thus reflecting positively on the rest of the states and peoples, and contributing to the salvation of mankind from its dangers, and sorrows. In this respect, it is sufficient to mention the Arab Strategy for Control of Illicit Use of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances which includes the methods and measures to confront the phenomenon of Drugs from different dimensions and directions, and on various levels, national, regional and international. The Strategy has also defined under the item { Arab-International Cooperation} the bases and rules of cooperation with other countries in the procedural, technical, judicial and legal domains. On many

occasions, our council has urged all the Arab states to join the United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic on Narcotic Drugs and

Psychotropic Substances. The number of Arab states who have already joined the convention so far is (17) seventeen. Moreover, the Arab states have signed, amongst themselves on one hand, and with other foreign states, on the other hand, (32) thirty two conventions (bilateral and multilateral) in the field of Drug Control.

Mr. Chairman .....

Ladies and Gentlemen .....

I have briefly addressed the efforts exerted by the (AIMC) in combating the phenomena of Terrorism and Drugs which are considered among the ugliest organized criminal phenomena, and the most dangerous indeed. But there is no sufficient time to address the efforts exerted by the Council in other fields and domains. I reiterate, however, the will of our Arab States to cooperate with the various countries of the world to fight crimes, especially the organized one, so that our world becomes free, as much as possible, of crime, and enjoys the elements of harmony, peace, and solidarity.

At the end of my speech, I would like to express our great satisfaction with the strong and close relations that bind us to the United Nations Center in Vienna, which shall be soon strengthening with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the United Nations International Drug Control Program. I would like also to congratulate His Excellency the Secretary General and his senior assistants for the excellent preparation for this congress. I would like also to wish His Excellency the Chairman of the congress and the participants all of the best and success.

Thank you.