



In the name of Allah Most Gracious Most Merciful

Statement

International Union for Muslim Scholars on Covid-19 Pandemic; Outcomes and Lessons Learned.





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All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, and peace and blessings upon His Messenger.

The International Union for Muslim Scholars (IUMS) has been following with great concern the latest world-wide developments related to the Covid-19 pandemic. IUMS's concern stems from the crisis that humanity faced and still facing, the large number of infections and especially the many lives lost. IUMS offers its sincere support, sympathy and condolences for all those who were affected and are still being affected by this crisis.

The full scale of the consequences of this pandemic is still not clear. What is clear however is that no effort should be spared in the cause of protecting human lives, and that a comprehensive, balanced and values-based approach is required in order to protect the fine balance of nature while promoting brotherhood, justice, cooperation and benevolence amongst all fellow humans.

IUMS is publishing this statement out of concern and a feeling of responsibility towards humanity. We begin with a description of these events from our perspective, followed by messages to a number of stakeholders.

1. Understanding and practicing Islam:

The Corona virus crisis showed the world that Muslims in general are ready to shoulder their responsibility in facing the common challenges of our time. The Muslim contribution, which manifested in many forms, stemmed from Islam's beliefs, objectives and moral values. Muslim jurists, in particular, showed a high level of dedication and research, in order to present creative solutions and answers to emerging questions. The general approach and objective was to preserve life and protect the environment. Fatwa councils in Muslim-majority and minority regions worked exceptionally hard in order to contribute to the prevention efforts for which local and international health authorities called.

2. Global economic system:

The Corona virus crisis revealed a deep crisis in the current global economic systems, whether leaning to the economic left or right. It revealed that the Economy is given more value and prominence than the value of the Human. The average individual, everywhere, suffered greatly and needlessly once the health-mandated lockdown started, and many millions of people, in "developed" and "under-developed" nations alike, quickly reached unprecedented levels of poverty and hunger. This was particularly evident in economic systems where social nets for



citizens and residents were missing or weak. Certain segments of the pharmaceutical and vaccine industries adopted inhumane policies, as they used the crisis as an opportunity to maximize profits rather than save lives. These industries are becoming more powerful than governments, and recruiting their own interest-based research centers and “charity” organizations to advance their profit agendas.

However, many small and large companies, owned by Muslims and non-Muslims, displayed a humane spirit and high moral character as they dealt with the crisis. These values manifested in remaining faithful to their contracts with their employees despite their loss in profits, re-defining some of the commercial activities to fill gaps in the needed equipment and medical supplies, and an unprecedented rise in social responsibility and philanthropic projects. These developments were very positive, despite the fact that they were not enough to meet the pressing demands caused by the crisis, especially in countries where social justice mechanisms are weak or missing.

3. Global political system:

The Corona virus crisis also revealed a deep crisis in the current global political systems, whether democratic or authoritarian. This manifested in a lack of an early and transparent reaction to the crisis in many countries, which was motivated by politicians’ giving priority to selfish and monetary interests over human lives and human welfare. The political/moral crisis also manifested in the way many politicians dealt with minorities and migrant workers, and especially in exploit the situation in order to expand the powers of the executive government everywhere. The most hideous of this exploitation were the actions of the Israeli Occupation in Jerusalem and the West Bank and its attempts to expand the occupation and change the reality on the ground in several ways.

However, several local and national government officials, Muslims and non-Muslims, showed a high level of integrity in dealing with the crisis. They used the public resources in programs that aimed at saving as many lives and livelihoods as possible, despite the pressures that some greedy businesses and interest groups put on them. Some governments took the brave step of supporting research in publicly funded universities and research centers in order to attempt to come up with the much needed vaccines and medicines and break the monopolies of the pharmaceutical industry.

4. Global social system:

The Corona virus crisis also revealed a deep crisis in the current global social system, whether traditional or liberal. This crisis manifested especially in a general lack of family values, which resulted in a large number of casualties in various countries due to violence against women during the lockdown. The right of the elderly to a decent retirement was not honored sufficiently in many societies, and we witnessed high rates of death and lack of appropriate care for the elderly, especially in care homes. We also witnessed, in the context of the pandemic, a rise in racist ideologies across cultures and oppression of racial minorities through scapegoating and fear mongering, including certain so called Islamic governments, who -under the pressure of some interest groups- gave in to unjust and immoral policies and legislations.



However, many people across cultures also showed a high level of dedication to higher social values and God-given rights, especially as they dealt with family, the elderly, the disabled, the poor and the destitute. Many people showed a high level of dedication to human life, especially workers on the front lines of fighting the pandemic and in essential services. With the Mercy of God, their efforts were crucial for humanity to avoid a major disastrous and long-term impact of the crisis.

5. Global health care system:

The Corona virus crisis also revealed weaknesses in the current global health care system, and especially a general lack of the facilities needed to face such pandemics. The crisis also revealed the wide-spread and deep problem of treating health care as a commodity rather than a God-given right.

However, we witnessed a growing sense of realization in many nations that the right to basic health care is a human right. This is a positive development.

6. Global environmental system:

Directly related to the Corona virus pandemic, we are witnessing a global attack on the divine balance of the nature; plants, water, air, natural resources and especially animal life. Disregarding this divine balance resulted in corruption on the earth, as far as the Quranic expression goes; corruption that took many forms.

However, we also witnessed a growing sense of realization in many nations of the importance of rectifying the global path in dealing with nature and preserving this balance. This is a positive development.

Therefore, and building on the above, the International Union for Muslim Scholars (IUMS) would like to address the following entities:

1. Decision makers:

a. Governments and executive bodies:

IUMS calls upon all branches of governments and especially executive bodies to deal with the current crisis with the utmost level of transparency, and to side with the value of human life regardless of the economic and political cost. Governments are called to maintain an ethical approach that does not exploit the crisis in order to alter the balance of powers or the balance of diversity in their societies. They are also called not to support any piece of legislation or decisions that contradict divine law or legitimate international law or treaties. IUMS specifically warns against the consequences of the Israeli occupation's aggression against the Sacred Aqsa Mosque and the rights of the Palestinian people.



IUMS also calls upon Arab and Islamic governments to grant legitimate freedoms to their people and widen the scope of democratic practices. It is time for all Arab and Islamic governments to start a process of reconciliation with their people and work towards national and Islamic unity and cooperation.

IUMS also calls upon decision makers to work on diminishing the vast gap of resources and wealth between rich and poor/developing nations. This gap has resulted in major phenomena of wars and refugees, and thus a waste of major public budgets to the arms industry, instead of using them for the public interest of humanity, including the expenses needed to face the current pandemic and its consequences.

The Union also calls upon extremists of all sorts to re-think their stances and stop their hateful and racist discourses, especially Islamophobia.

IUMS calls upon states not to restrict themselves to their internal affairs and hence reinforce racism and nationalism within their borders. It is time for humanity to realize that international cooperation is the key to social stability and peace making. IUMS specifically addresses Arab and Islamic governments to re-open the space for civil and relief organizations, which have been largely curtailed because of foreign pressures. Arab and Islamic governments should learn from studying the positive impact of western civil society organizations and how these organizations helped their governments face the pandemic.

IUMS calls upon Muslims to re-activate the Islamic institutions of Zakah (annual charity), Waqf (endowments and foundations), Qrad-Hassan (interest free loans), and small and mid-size businesses. These institutions, when built on sound foundations and managed properly, play a primary role in facing crises such as the current pandemic.

Last but not least, IUMS is calling upon governments that hold captive prisoners of opinion and conscience to free them, and to work towards a national unity that deals with the pandemic and its anticipated economic and social consequences.

b. Businesses and companies:

IUMS calls upon decision makers in businesses and companies to be cognizant of the fragile financial situation of most blue and white collar workers everywhere and in all professions. Thus, they are called upon not to lay off their employees in order to maintain their levels of profit, but rather consider them to be partners in the businesses, and share gains and losses with them in an equitable manner. A special request to companies that deal in the sensitive

medical field, not to exploit the situation, monopolize goods or misuse the intellectual property laws to deprive the poor and weak from their basic rights. Another special request to humanity not to destroy any form of God's creation - animals, birds, or plants - for the sake of price levels or bottom-line calculations.

c. International organizations:

IUMS calls upon all international organizations to fulfil their sacred responsibility of speaking



the truth to those in power, be it political or economic, and to side with humanity, globally, wherever it is, without discrimination. Let us call upon these powers to maintain justice and equity and to cease their double-standard and double-speak policies. Let us call upon powers that have “veto powers” in the UN to stop using them to obstruct the causes of justice instead of supporting forces of occupation, oppression and tyranny. Let us call upon all powers to direct their attention to the environmental crisis and re-define their policies in order to preserve our planet. The latest research proves that the environmental crisis is related to health crises on the human level.

2. Scholars and thinkers:

a. Muslim Scholars:

IUMS calls upon the scholars of Islam to remain faithful to the message of Islam, to carry the responsibility of calling upon its balanced and magnanimous path, and to continue to pursue research in order to produce sound scholarship to help Muslims and humanity at large solve their problems. The preservation of faith, life, intellect, dignity, family and wealth should be at the top of the principles that they embrace, as well as the principles of recognizing God’s mercy and blessings, and raising the level of awareness and consciousness of communities everywhere. Scholars of Islam should maintain the highest moral standard and set a role model for humanity to follow.

b. Researchers and thinkers:

IUMS strongly supports the ideas that a number of thinkers around the world have proposed recently, in which they expressed the need to renew the current environmental, economic, and social systems. This renewal is necessary for a better balance in human life and better governance. IUMS calls upon researchers and thinkers to direct their intellectual projects towards a much needed reconstruction of the contemporary political, economic, social, medical, environmental, educational and entertainment systems. The aim of this reconstruction shall be the achievement of the higher purposes and values of human existence and God-created natural disposition. Of special importance is the reconstruction of the global economic system where material gain and consumption are the ultimate goals, into a system that is centered upon human life and guided dealing with the nature resources.

c. Research and educational institutes:

IUMS calls upon research and educational institutes to overcome the serving of economic and political oligopolies, and focus on research and education that serves the human, rectifies earth and liberates nations from the modern inhumane forms of slavery, especially economically. Islamic studies, in particular, is requested to focus on research and curricula that supports the contribution of Muslims to the contemporary world, and free them from their historical divisions and disputes. Islamic knowledge must be comprehensive and integrated and must seek solutions of contemporary problems from an Islamic perspective. Islamic curricula must be revised in order to promote proper Islamic ethics and education.



3. Nations and communities:

As a community-based non-governmental organization, IUMS would like to address the human community, the Muslim community and the non-governmental organizations as follows:

a. Humanity, everywhere:

Our fellow humans, human life is a blessing from God, who created the human and dignified him/her inside out, and gave humanity the means to stay healthy and happy. God asked us to only consume what is good and healthy and avoid what is dirty and harmful. God in His ultimate wisdom also sanctioned trials in this life, in order for humans to learn, rectify their mistakes and for sincere believers to increase in faith.

We call on everyone included ourselves, during this crisis, to reflect upon the values of life, turn to our Lord for support and guidance, and to search within the Islamic and human values for solutions to our crises. We need to re-think the relationship between humans and nature, as well as the human-human relationship.

b. The community of Muslims everywhere:

Our fellow Muslims, this Ummah/community will never succeed except when it returns to the pure source of Islam, the Book and the Prophetic tradition, when it rids itself from tyranny and its heavy burden on Muslims and humanity in general, and when it works for the achievement of the higher objectives of God from Muslims. These higher objectives, as we all know, include setting a good example for humanity, enjoining good and forbidding evil, establishing justice and equity, and contributing to contemporary human civilization. It is about time that the Ummah of Islam understand Islam in a comprehensive way, work to realize its higher objectives, and align itself with God's universal laws, including the laws for revival and change. A special mention is given to the Western Muslim minorities, especially their role in facing the current crisis.

c. Non-governmental organizations and movements:

Our fellow non-governmental organizations and movements, let us continue to strengthen the power of civil society and collaborate with civil powers in order to reconstruct the contemporary political, economic and educational systems everywhere. Let us aim in this reconstruction to realize the higher objectives of Islam and humanity.

Finally, IUMS cannot stress more the importance of collaboration amongst the Children of Adam everywhere. We are all passengers on one ship, if some of us decide to breach this ship and are not stopped, all people from all walks of life will drown. Hence, we extend our hands with a call for peace and collaboration amongst all humans in order to realize the common good. God Almighty in His Holy Book said: "O mankind, be heedful of your Lord who created you from one being, created her mate from her, and spread from them both many men and women. And heed God by whom you entreat each other and the relations that bore you. God is upon you ever watchful" (Quran 4:1).

