
IRAQ HOLDS PREPARATORY NATIONAL RECONCILIATION MEETING

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13.12.2017

Arab News, 13 Dec 2017

Iraq held a two-day meeting of the countrys elites in preparation for a national reconciliation conference.

Co-organized by the Foreign Ministry, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Iraqi Reconciliation Committee, the meeting □ which ended Tuesday □ constitutes a first concrete step toward entrenching national reconciliation.

Congratulating Iraq on its decisive victory over Daesh, OIC Secretary-General Dr. Yousef Al-Othaimeen said the country is ushering in a new phase in the path toward national reconciliation, enhanced security and stability, and reconstruction of liberated provinces.

Due attention should be given to accelerating displaced persons return to their towns and villages, he added.

The OIC believes that the solution to the Iraqi crisis must be decided by Iraqis themselves, free from any external interference, which involves making concessions, Al-Othaimeen said, adding that when rooted in equal individual rights, citizenship is a key part of the solution.

Iraqis should make their sectarian, linguistic, cultural and regional diversity a source of harmony and strength, not discord and weakness, he said.

The OIC remains at an equal distance from all parties and blocs in Iraq, seeking the wider interests of the country and its people, he added.

Everyone looks forward to the day when there will be full, lasting national reconciliation in Iraq, Al-Othaimeen said, adding that the country remains central to the stability of the Arab and Muslim worlds.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Ibrahim Al-Jaafari stressed the key role played by the OIC and its secretary-general in the national reconciliation process. There are good signs that national reconciliation is underway, Al-Jaafari said.