

**ADDRESS BY**

**HIS EXCELLENCY, ADAMA BARROW,  
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE  
GAMBIA AND CHAIRMAN OF THE 15TH  
ORGANISATION OF ISLAMIC  
COUNTRIES (OIC) ISLAMIC SUMMIT**

**HELD IN BANJUL, THE GAMBIA**

**4TH - 5TH MAY 2024**

Your Majesties,  
Your Highnesses,  
Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government,  
Secretary General of the OIC,  
Our Distinguished Chief Guest of Honour,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Esteemed Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Asalamu Alaikum, Wa Rahmatullah, Wa Barakaatuhu.

I feel extremely honoured and uniquely privileged to welcome all the illustrious leaders, eminent personalities, and distinguished delegates and guests in our midst to this 15th Summit of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

I very warmly welcome you all with great pride and delight on behalf of the entire Government and People of The Republic of The Gambia, including my humble self as your host. Feel at home on the Smiling Coast of Africa, and enjoy every moment of your stay with us.

Your Majesties, Excellencies, and Distinguished Guests,

After several unavoidable postponements, we have eventually converged for this eagerly-awaited auspicious Islamic Summit.

For this achievement, I express most profound appreciation and gratitude to His Majesty, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud of The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Custodian of The Two Holy Mosques and Chairman of The 14th OIC Summit,

together with the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, His Royal Highness, Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud for their unwavering support and generosity. Their massive financial and material support allowed us to make all the necessary preparations for the occasion.

Furthermore, on behalf of the OIC, I deeply thank the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and Chair of the 14th OIC Summit for the laudable work done during The Kingdom's tenure as Chair of the OIC over the past three years.

In the same vein, I sincerely commend the OIC Secretary-General and his staff for magnificently running the Organisation's affairs since his appointment. Their dedication and tireless efforts hugely contributed to the success of our collective endeavours.

Relatedly, allow me to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the President of the People's Republic of China, His Excellency, President Xi Jinping. His contribution towards the construction of this splendid state-of-the-art Conference Centre is remarkably invaluable.

The Centre symbolises our unity and stands as a testament to the enduring partnership between our two countries. Its benefits to the Gambian nation cannot be over-emphasised, as it fosters economic growth and enables us to host such prestigious gatherings, thus boosting our international standing.

Your Majesties, Excellencies, and Distinguished Guests,

We have convened here today with the awareness that the Muslim world faces numerous challenges, ranging from the calamities of terrorism to factional violence and armed conflicts.

Amid this unrest, we must reaffirm our commitment to mediation and dialogue as indispensable mechanisms to resolve conflict and foster lasting peace. It is fitting, therefore, that the theme for this 15th Session is "Enhancing Unity and Solidarity through Dialogue and Sustainable Development."

Excellencies, Esteemed Delegates,

Since the OIC seeks to promote solidarity and unity among Muslims around the world and find solutions to their problems.

This Summit provides a unique opportunity for Member States to strengthen relations through dialogue, share experiences for deeper mutual understanding, and adopt innovative resolutions that go beyond national borders to foster collective peace and inclusive sustainable development. A viable route to achieve these objectives lies in sustained cordial relations within an environment of trust and cooperation.

As President of The Republic of The Gambia and Chairman of the OIC for the next three years, we pledge to promote unity, solidarity, and sustainable development within the Islamic world. Our approach will include prioritising initiatives that enhance economic cooperation, foster cultural exchange, and address pressing issues, such as poverty and access to education and healthcare.

In collaboration with other Member States, The Gambia stands committed to championing the cause of peace and stability in regions troubled by conflict. We advocate implementing diplomatic solutions and providing humanitarian assistance to alleviate the suffering of distressed people.

Through proactive engagement and meaningful dialogue, we will encourage unity and solidarity among Member States, based on a shared vision of a peaceful, prosperous, and equitable future for all.

In this context, it is essential to address the prolonged conflict in Palestine and the devastating wars in Gaza. Those encounters have caused endless human suffering for over seventy-five (75) years.

Certainly, the plight of the Palestinians is a matter of grave concern, not only to the Muslim Ummah but also the entire world.

The ongoing violence, instability in the region, and humanitarian crisis in Gaza continue to make the prospects for peace remote. In fact, the hostilities pose a serious threat to regional stability and global peace.

I call upon Member States to take decisive action to address the root causes of the conflict and work towards a just and lasting solution. This should include convening a Comprehensive Peace Conference for all stakeholders to negotiate a settlement that provides for the rights, dignity, security, and sovereignty of the communities affected.

In our view, military action is not an option; rather, we endorse a Peace Accord based on a two-state solution. This proposal is to guarantee both states the right to full sovereignty and self-determination.

Further, we reaffirm the need to enable the Palestinian people to regain their legitimate national rights, as recognised by the International Community, through its recognition of a State of Palestine within the 1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Shareef as its Capital.

To maintain peace and lasting peaceful co-existence in the entire region, as leaders of the Islamic world, we must seize this opportunity to chart a new course towards peace and reconciliation.

Let us recommit ourselves to the principles of justice, equality, and mutual respect, act collectively to end the suffering of the Palestinian people, and build a future of peace and prosperity for all.

I commend South Africa for its recent decision to take Israel to the International Court of Justice, following in our footsteps to seek justice under the Genocide Convention.

This bold move illustrates the collective commitment of the international community to the principles of justice and human rights. It sends a powerful message that impunity for grave violations of international law, such as those committed against the Palestinian people, will not be tolerated.

We stand in solidarity with South Africa and all those who advocate justice and accountability, and we pledge our support for their efforts to seek redress for the victims of atrocities committed by Israel.

Your Excellencies,

I am proud to state that, in its capacity as Chair of the Ad-Hoc OIC Ministerial Committee on Human Rights Violations against the Rohingya People, The Gambia is actively pursuing the legal proceedings filed against Myanmar in the quest for justice and accountability.

We consider it an obligation to stand in solidarity with oppressed and vulnerable populations and champion the cause of human rights, in accordance with the principles of the Genocide Convention.

The legal case of the Rohingya pursued by The Gambia at the ICJ boldly represents concerted international effort to address the ongoing human rights crisis in Myanmar and ensure accountability.

The Gambia's initiative has received widespread support. Numerous countries, human rights organisations, and legal experts endorse our action and call for justice for the Rohingya people.

I invite Member States to contribute towards meeting the legal fees for this legal battle and urge that we stand in solidarity against oppression and atrocity.

Your Excellencies,

Under The Gambia's Chairmanship of the OIC, agreed strategies and initiatives will be implemented to promote solidarity, unity, and problem-solving among Member States. The approach will aim at advancing the Organisation's main objectives. The Gambia is thus willing to enhance Dialogue, Cooperation, and Mediation to resolve conflicts among Member States.

Excellencies,

Unfortunately, under-development characterises many Member States, hence poverty, inequality, and natural disasters make humanitarian assistance and development aid necessary.

The need is also obvious for significant Capacity Building and Technical Assistance to address the governance, healthcare, education, and infrastructure development requirements in certain Member States. By addressing such development challenges, peace, and stability would be guaranteed.

With peace, the Organisation can promote the rich Islamic cultural heritage and values through cultural exchange programmes and educational initiatives. In the process, we can proudly showcase our Muslim Identities worldwide to promote peace, understanding, and solidarity.

Esteemed Delegates,

We live in a world that requires Religious Tolerance, which does not imply abandoning one's beliefs or values.

It is simply a means of promoting peace, understanding, respect, and dialogue within the Muslim world and across communities and religious groups.

Additionally, Member States should promote and increase Economic Cooperation and Trade among themselves. This has the prospect of showcasing the shared values of the Islamic Ummah and sharing the blessings Allah has bestowed on many of our member countries. Such strategies could equally contribute to fulfilling the aspirations of young people in search of better livelihood.

It is wise, as well, that we harness our diversity to devise strategies that respond to the demands of change and reform, but this must be informed by our noble values, ideas, and objectives.

In conclusion, let us reaffirm our commitment to justice, equality, and mutual respect and re-dedicate ourselves to the honourable cause of advancing the interests of the Muslim Ummah and humanity.

May this Summit serve to fulfil our vision of “Unity and Solidarity Through Dialogue and Sustainable Development” and act as a catalyst for positive change to pave the way for a world of peace, security, and prosperity for all generations.

I pray also that the future is filled with joy and marked by reconciliation, harmony, and progress for the OIC, the Muslim Ummah, and humanity at large.

Thank you for your attention.